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FREEDOM, FAREWELL!

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THE SPINNER OF THE YEARS
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INHERITANCE
A MODERN TRAGEDY
THE WHOLE OF THE STORY

FREEDOM, FAREWELL!

by

PHYLLIS BENTLEY

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“The history of past centuries ought to be the instructress of the present, though not in the vulgar sense, as if one could simply by turning the leaves discover the conjunctures of the present in the records of the past ; it is instructive because the observation of earlier forms of culture reveals the organic conditions of civilisation generally—the fundamental forces everywhere alike, and the manner of their combination different. . . . In this sense the history of Caesar and of Roman Imperialism is in truth a more bitter censure of modern autocracy than could be written by the hand of man.”

MOMMSEN : *History of Rome*, Vol. IV.

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BOOK I

THESE ARE THE MEN

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I

ONE WHO KNOWS HIS MIND

THE RAIN, which had been a joke, became an enemy and at last an intolerable nuisance.

At first it had amused the slight young man with the pale skin that he should be ascending a mountain pass at dusk alone behind a smelly peasant, while thunder rolled and lightning flashed and heavy raindrops stung his cheek. It was an adventure, an escapade; it had a tang of reality which games and military exercises lacked; and it was amusing to reflect that instead of a hot bath and suave host blandly expecting him, there was on the contrary, to speak bluntly, a price on his head and a set of ruffians after him aching to earn it. (Odd how rapidly one's fellow-countrymen became ruffians when one's political views disagreed!) The scenery too provided an agreeable change from city streets; a wall of gnarled and matted oaks mixed with large grey rocks of fantastic shape over which torrents foamed with a really surprising roar, a background of towering jagged peaks, a carpet of green sprawling weeds and sharp white stones, formed a landscape as unfamiliar as it was striking. Or perhaps merely striking because unfamiliar, reflected the young man, tittering to himself down his high-bridged nose. At any rate, there was at first something in the air, the scene, the rain, the situation, which made one's pulse beat fast and life in general strike one as agreeable. The rain, however, continued to fall; it found its way down the young man's neck, soaked his thin city shoes and damped his bony shoulders; he sneezed, and cleared his throat apprehensively. To be murdered by brutal soldiery was a fate one knew how

to endure with proper dignity, but to die of a fever caught in the rain would really be quite intolerably ridiculous—if any signs of such a calamity showed themselves he must get killed at once, reflected the young man, tittering again. The worst of it was, he was somewhat liable to such fevers. He drew his cloak closer and tightened his shoes; he disliked any constriction about his person, but was too sensible to neglect any precaution which might serve to protect his shrinking body from the rain. But presently, as they topped the rise and saw another steep before them and topped that and found themselves still far from the summit of the pass, he ceased to trouble himself; the rain flowed as though poured from a jar, and the young man became so wet that there was no more to be hoped or feared about it: he was soaked to the skin, and that was all. He gladly loosened his cloak, whereupon his garments steamed, and the disagreeable odour of damp wool filled the air; a bath after all, but a tepid one, thought the young man, wrinkling his nose disgustedly. The monotonous persistence of the rain offended his fastidious patrician nerves; it was incompatible with the civilised taste of the age that anything should go on so long nowadays, he reflected.

The dusk was now sinking into dark; the oaks and the mountains had lost their novelty but continued to march past, shrouded in driving grey rain, the stony path grew uncommonly steep and slippery, and the young man found himself weary of the whole affair. The joke of it was that he did not particularly care for his young wife, and would have been willing enough to divorce her if he had not been bidden. She was quiet and gentle, with a mild look which he had thought to betoken the noble serenity he sought in women; but it had proved to be merely dullness after all. (The child now was different; the young man's thin lips curved into a gay and tender smile as he thought of his infant daughter's sweet breath and starry eyes.) The match had a political usefulness when it was made; it had drawn fresh ties

between himself and the Popular party, and those ties he did not, and never should, repent. But now the Popular party was in the dust, with the Dictator's heel crushing its bleeding head, and he was commanded to divorce his wife if he wished to save his skin. His dark grey eyes, piercing beneath pale lids, flashed haughtily at the memory; his pale nostrils dilated. He would not divorce to give any ruler pleasure; he would live his life on no man's terms except his own. He would probably save his skin as well, he reflected cheerfully; the Dictator was old and, men said, ailing; there was a great deal of luck in these matters in any case and no man's day was over till he lay lifeless on the ground. In the olden time his fellow-countrymen had understood that thoroughly, had understood how to live as they would and die when they must; but to-day! An exclamation of affectionate reproach broke from the young man's lips as he reflected on the state of his country to-day: its divisions, its corruptions, its anomalous forms of government, its surface luxury and frivolity, its underlying fatigue and despair. The Dictator would repair modern abuses by restoring ancient ones for a few years, and then die and leave both ancient and modern worse than before. I must save myself for my country's service, reflected the young man with his usual cool good-humour; there's not so much sense in the City that mine can be spared. Thinking thus, he poked the peasant in the ribs, and cried:

"Do you really know the way, my good fellow?" in a high mincing tone.

The countryman replied gruffly, through his beard. "You know that I know it," he said in a contemptuous growl.

With his speech a smell of garlic floated on the air.

This is one of the good old peasant farmers we all make speeches about and never see, reflected the young man: the men who make the staunchest soldiers, the backbone of the State. How little we in the City, who pretend to govern, know of these men and their lives. The night is black as Erebus, yet

he knows the path. Who made these paths, in any case? What bold spirit first crossed the mountain, under what need? And who, later, skilfully chose the most gradual slopes for his children's feet? Records should be kept of these things, histories written. Nothing so provoked the young man as the unnecessary muddle caused by ignorance; he liked all matters to be clear and well arranged. If he had any idea how long this journey would last, for instance, and in what direction the path, which was now at last descending, wound its interminable and uneven course, his mental fatigue and exasperation would surely be less acute. He ought to have asked the names of the mountains and the streams as they passed, he admonished himself; the excitement of flying for his life, and lack of breath, had hitherto prevented such questions, but it was not too late now. He began at once upon the peasant, and realised in some surprise the difficulty of describing the features of a landscape so that they should be recognised by another person, especially when the landscape has been seen only in dusk and rain. The military manuals made no mention of such difficulties, he reflected thoughtfully; he made a mental note of their importance in a campaign.

"'St ! Quiet !" said the countryman suddenly, his hand on the other's arm. "I hear steps."

The young man stood still at once, and listened intently. Away to the right came, muffled by distance and the thunder of the stream, yet unmistakable, the sharp sound of voices and the shuffle of human feet.

"Does a road run there?" he whispered.

"Aye," said the peasant. "The main road through the plain towards the sea."

They listened; the noise of movement swelled.

"They're coming this way?" murmured the young man.

"It's hard to tell," began the peasant. "The wind——"

"Listen," interrupted the young man sharply: "If we are caught, see that you run away at once."

"Run away?" repeated the peasant in amaze. It was what he intended to do, naturally, but to be commanded to it struck him as strange.

"I can tell lies better alone," returned the young man with his soft titter. "Tell me, where does the house I am seeking stand?"

"To the right," said the peasant, waving his arm vaguely in that direction. After a pause he added: "I think *they* are making for it too."

The young man listened carefully; the voices had dulled to a blur, and the noise of human footsteps was gradually diminishing. The two stood silent and motionless until the sound was little more than a murmur in the air, then with a sigh of relief they relaxed their tense attitudes.

"Well, come now," said the young man: "We must turn to the left and seek a path elsewhere. The wind won't carry our steps to their ears, luckily."

The countryman grunted in a gloomy tone that they must descend from this pass before they could ascend another.

"Very well," said the young man impatiently. "Quick, then; let us descend."

The countryman with a sigh seemed to yield, or at any rate to postpone defiance for the moment; he began his long, slow tireless stride again, and the young man followed, stepping briskly. So intent were they upon the need to put distance between themselves and the just audible party on the right that they had swung quite round a jutting point of rock and into a detachment of soldiers standing on their left before they realised that the wind might serve others as well as themselves. The light of a torch gleamed on spear and helmet, and the peasant was off, skipping over the rocks like a goat; the young man exclaimed in bitter disgust, but held his ground. The soldiers, who were crouching uncomfortably in the wet grass, sprang to a word of command and cut off his rear; the capture was complete.

"Now, young sir," said a very burly centurion with a

broken nose, advancing with an air of satisfaction behind the man who held the torch. He coughed, smote himself on the chest to clear his throat, and began to intone: "In the name of the Senate and the Roman People . . ."

"For whom do you take me that you greet me with so much ceremony?" demanded the young man in a smooth affable tone.

"I take you for Caius Julius Caesar, no less," replied the centurion emphatically. "And," he added, with a contemptuous glance at the young patrician's torn and dragged cloak, "no more." At this his men dutifully sniggered. "Now, young man," continued the centurion, waving forward with his staff of office a legionary ominously armed with a heavy axe: "It's no use making a fuss. You're one of the proscribed, and have to die, so take my advice and die like a Roman. It's better for all parties in the end. If you've any farewell messages, I'll do my best to deliver them in the proper quarter. I've sons myself of your age," he went on sentimentally: "but you shouldn't have mixed yourself up with Marius and Cinna, you know. You might have guessed there'd be trouble when Sulla got home."

"I am not the man you are looking for," drawled the young man at this point coolly.

"Eh? What? You're Caius Julius Caesar, aren't you?" cried the centurion, quite disconcerted. "Cinna's son-in-law and nephew to Marius' wife? We had orders to watch for you in these passes here."

"I am not the man you are looking for," repeated the young man in his calm mincing tones. "I regret that you and your men should have wasted so much time on an obscure citizen like myself, and I am prepared to offer a small solatium in token of my regret."

There was a pause. The man with the axe, Caesar observed with some relief out of the corner of his eye, lowered it to the ground and leant on it thoughtfully.

"O, well; of course that's a different matter," said

the centurion at length with a sheepish air. "But this solatium now—how much would it amount to?"

"A talent, no less," drawled Caesar firmly. "And," he added, for the first time raising his pale lids and turning on the centurion the full sparkling glance of his dark-grey eyes, "no more."

At this the soldiers sniggered again, and a grudging smile appeared even on the centurion's face, entangled in his heavy beard. The proffered bribe was certainly magnificent. "Clever, aren't you?" he jeered, but with an undercurrent of respect. "This money—have you got it with you now?"

Caesar hesitated. It seemed to him so obvious that if he admitted carrying the money on his person the men could murder him and thus gain both money and reward, that he doubted whether even the centurion could fail to grasp an idea so simple. "I will write you a letter to my mother," he began, with less than his usual decision, and was interrupted by a shout of derisive scorn.

"That's no use to us," said the centurion, joining heartily in the general mirth. "You'd be surprised how few of the relatives of the proscribed want them saved, my boy. There's the inheritance, you see. I know these widowed mothers!"

"You don't know mine," thought Caesar, with a swift recollection of Aurelia's plain square honourable face, her noble stature and commanding eye. The picture nerved him to play the game to the end, however. "It is you who are too clever for me, centurion," he tittered mildly, feeling beneath his cloak for his purse and untying its string beneath the damp wool folds. As he drew out gold coins he had the wit to say, glancing round at the watching soldiers: "You'll see these honest fellows get their share?" He was rewarded by a sudden tension in the air, a frown on the centurion's brow and a gathering closer of the men.

"That's my affair," growled the centurion.

"Certainly, certainly," tittered Caesar, observing with pleasure that the legionaries obviously thought it theirs. He suddenly put a pile of gold in the centurion's hand, said: "Count it, centurion, count it!" and as the men involuntarily pressed closer, drawn by the gleam and chink of the coin, slipped back quietly till he stood on the outskirts of the pushing group.

None of Rome's soldiers had eyes for him; he took a few steps away stealthily, then gathered his cloak in one hand and ran. His spare limbs moved easily and well; he flew across the wet grass and slippery stones with a sure foot, heading steadily downwards, guided always by the roar of the swollen stream near by. He judged that even the broken-nosed centurion would not have led his men far from a good road, and he judged right; in a few minutes he found a bank of rising ground before him, and advancing up it stumbled into a waist-high wall. "The parapet of a bridge," judged Caesar, climbing it thankfully. He was right; in a moment he stood rubbing his sore shin on the solid pavement of the road which here skirted the base of the Apennines. The night was still as black as Styx, and though the rain had now stopped a heavy mist hung over the plain and made him shiver. Shall I go to the left and begin another pass, with more oaks and stones and streams and mountains, or to the right towards the house of a political ally, mused Caesar. He remembered the sounds of a travelling party which he and the countryman had heard towards the right, but decided to risk it all the same, and set off in that direction steadily.

His spirits, however, which had been raised by the encounter with the soldiers and the necessity for using his wits, sank lower with every step. Rain began to fall again, not with exciting force but in a thin depressing drizzle, and Caesar meditated with increasing bitterness on his wretched situation. An obscure youth, about (most probably) to perish obscurely on some provincial dung-hill; bedraggled, utterly unimportant, alone. *I take you for Caius Julius Caesar,*

no less and no more. No more. Ha ! The centurion had thought a talent a magnificent bribe for Caius Julius Caesar's life—and on my achievement hitherto he's right, admitted Caesar. I have done nothing, nothing, except chat wittily in a somewhat falsetto tone about the misdoings of the Senate; and the gods know it is not difficult to find material for that occupation. My contemporaries think of me as one of the ordinary brittle race of modern youth, perhaps a little better informed than some, but just as rakish and irresponsible as the rest. Even if the Vestal Virgins are successful in their intercession for me with Sulla, what sort of future lies before me ? There's no career for me in Rome while Sulla lives ; he's deprived me of my priesthood and my property, and holds me in such slight estimation that he thought he could as easily deprive me of my wife. (He was wrong there, however.) But that is all I am to-day : an obscure young man of no possible importance. And meanwhile that ass Cnaeus Pompey, so good-looking with his massive shoulders and curly springing hair, has made a name for himself, raising troops all over Picenum for Sulla and beating three consular armies ; Sulla dismounted to greet him when they met, it's said, and actually hailed him as Imperator on the field. Not that I grudge him his success, for it's impossible not to like Pompey ; he has a steady stupid honesty, rather pathetic in its way and very lovable ; he'd make an excellent second in command. But they speak of him everywhere as the coming man, the Republic's next great general. Pompey ! He hasn't an original idea in his head. Courage, yes ; and loyalty ; and a certain soft-heartedness which flowers rather charmingly in private life : but more than that is needed to save Rome. But there he is, the most illustrious young man of the day, and here am I, tramping a wet marsh in a filthy cloak, alone. They didn't even send a whole century out to bring back my head ; there aren't more than twenty men in that little group behind there which took my gold. O, well, well ; perhaps they'll find they were mistaken,

some day, thought Caesar, but I'm afraid that day is a long way off. Meanwhile I must save my life, I suppose. He applied himself to the business with cynical efficiency.

His steady pace had now brought him almost within hailing distance of the party in front; the red glare of their torches, reflected on the mist, made a lurid blur ahead. Caesar now listened attentively, walking on the grass as a precaution, and presently his sharp ear distinguished, out of the distant murmur, the flat shuffling tap of sandals on wet stone. His heart lightened, for that irregular tread could not belong to soldiers on the march. He left the road, ran ahead as swiftly as he was able over the rough wet ground and crouched behind a boulder to watch them pass. As he had guessed, the party was not alarming from the military point of view; it consisted of some ten slaves and a couple of freedmen, in charge of a closed litter which was evidently occupied, for they handled it with care. This was not the escort of a senator or indeed of any person of Roman importance, and unless Caesar's luck was out and the litter bore a belated Italian of strongly Sullan views (a thing very unlikely in this part of the country) the company probably held no danger for him, but on the contrary greater safety than he could hope for alone. One might take the chance at any rate, decided Caesar; without further hesitation he scrambled up from behind his boulder, ran on ahead of the party, and turning to face them cried in a ringing voice: "Stand!"

The foremost slaves at once halted in alarm, and one of the freedmen came bustling up, trying in vain to make his fat frightened face appear belligerent.

"Kindly direct me to the villa of Marcus Junius Brutus," commanded Caesar loftily at once, to forestall awkward questions.

For some reason this seemed to disconcert them, the freedman's jaw dropped, the slaves exchanged frightened glances.

"What is the matter, Philippus?" asked a quiet voice from within the litter. "Why do we delay?"

It was a woman's voice—low, grave and clear—and a Roman voice, speaking with a rather stately Latinity, such as one rarely heard nowadays save on the lips of high-born elderly matrons.

"It's a wild-looking young man, madam," cried the freedman, "asking the way to the master's house."

"I intend no harm, madam," said Caesar at this, speaking in a loud tone so that he might be heard within the litter, but with respect. "I am a Roman, a member of the priestly college, the son of a man of praetorian rank; I have lost my companions on the mountain, and seek the villa of Marcus Junius Brutus, where I have been promised shelter for the night."

"Ask the young man to speak to me here, Philippus," said the voice in the same grave tranquil tones.

The slaves, glad of the chance to be rid of their burden for a moment, set down the litter as Caesar stepped towards its side. The leather curtain rattled on its rings, and he found himself looking into the clear grey eyes of a young and beautiful woman, dressed in the stole and palla of the Roman wife. Her face, oval in shape, rather pale, was quiet and grave and pure, like her voice; her dark lustrous hair, knotted in the Grecian fashion, was drawn back rather severely from her broad brow and held by a plain white band. In the crook of her left arm an infant a few months old slept peacefully, wrapped in a white shawl. Caesar glanced at the delicious bloom on the child's rounded cheek, warm from sleep against his mother's breast, his long dark lashes and dimpled chin, appreciatively.

"I am Servilia, wife of the Brutus you seek and bound for the house you seek," explained the young mother with gentle dignity. "If you are a friend of my husband's, you are welcome there, but he himself is still in Rome."

Caesar at once gave his name, and in a low tone, so that the

slaves should not hear, explained that he was one of the proscribed, and why.

"Then you will travel with us—I shall be glad of your escort through this lonely country, in these troublous times," said Servilia calmly. "I have been visiting a neighbour, and am belated by the rain. I ought to warn you, however, that we met a party of soldiers further south who questioned us strictly; they were searching for you, no doubt; you have been lucky to avoid them."

"I did not avoid them," said Caesar with a slight grimace. "On the contrary I fell into their very midst, and had to buy my life with a bribe, unfortunately."

"Unfortunately? You mean that your life was so much the less worth having for the manner of its granting—that Rome would be better worth living for if her soldiers were not for sale," commented Servilia in her grave mild tone.

The young man exclaimed, and an unaccustomed colour tinged his pale cheek, for it had not occurred to *him* to regret the means by which he had saved his life. He recognised a nature finer than his own, and looked at the wife of Brutus with a very sincere admiration. He had not met this Servilia before, though he knew her sister and her half-brother, that odd awkward lad, young Cato. Her husband, too, he knew pretty well: a long thin sallow melancholy man with a stammer, ferocious when roused but usually something of a dreamer—the babe there in Servilia's arm had a look of his father, though the curve of cheek and brow that even in sleep lent his infant face distinction, were surely a heritage from the mother's side. Caesar bowed his head respectfully, and said: "You are in truth a Roman matron; you love the Republic."

It was now Servilia's turn to colour, and her faint blush made her seem younger and more girlish. "And you, too?" she said with less composure than she had hitherto displayed.

"And I," agreed Caesar gravely, looking in her eyes.

"We must move on—you are not safe so near the soldiers," said Servilia. "Philippus ! Tell the slaves to proceed."

She inclined her head in courteous dismissal to Caesar, and re-drew the curtain. The young man fell back ; the slaves took up the litter, and the party moved onward through the increasing rain.

The pause had chilled Caesar to the bone and made him realise his fatigue ; yet now his step was light, for his heart was high, he was no longer lost in gloomy brooding. The glimpse of the young mother with her child against her breast had touched the fund of hope and tenderness in his heart and set it flowing ; it was a picture so truly natural, so right, so essentially Roman. Rome was great, Rome was noble, Rome did not lack the virtue needed to rule the world, he felt, while Rome could produce such matrons, with soul so lofty and eyes so clear. Caesar strode along with his head in the air, cheerfully smiling.

The rest of the journey passed without incident, and the party, turning off presently from the main road, reached the villa of Brutus within an hour. This villa, Caesar learned from the slaves' talk, had formed part of Servilia's dowry, and was her favourite country residence. She was expected now, and the house was lighted and in readiness for her arrival ; slaves came out to meet them to relieve the litter-bearers of their burden, and their mistress sent one of their number back to make preparations for the reception of their guest.

The villa was a modest one ; its appointments were decent, but as far from luxury as Servilia's chaste proud glance from the hot eyes of Rome's courtesan of the moment, Flora. The bath was a single chilly room, the oil not of the finest quality ; the tunic which a slave laid out for Caesar's use, though agreeably dry and warm, was of coarse wool, home spun and home woven. The steward Philippus summoned him to sup, if he would, with Servilia ; in a small bare dimly lighted dining-room they were served a meal of eggs, dressed

mushrooms and fruit, for the frugality of which his hostess made no apologies. A withered old dame, some aunt or cousin of the Junian family, ate with them, and clucked avidly to him about Rome's latest gossip, while Servilia sat silent and stately in her plain white robes, her smile aloof but not unfriendly, her dark eyes serenely kind. Caesar felt a diffidence in addressing her unusual in his intercourse with women, but all that he said was meant for her ear. The sallies of the old aunt grew increasingly scandalous; in other company Caesar would have responded joyously enough, but to-night he evaded her with an amused embarrassment. At length his eye caught Servilia's while the old Junia was in the midst of one of her spiciest stories; each coloured, then smiled candidly at the other as over the head of a child.

"These are trifles, aunt," said Servilia then, though in a gentle tone which robbed the speech of all unkindness. "Let us rather talk of the present dangers of the Republic. This conflict between the Popular party and the Senate," she went on, speaking directly to Caesar, while the old aunt mumbled crossly over an apple—"this conflict which we have had since the days of the Gracchi, which is now being fought out by the sword—what is its true meaning? My husband, like you, belongs to the Popular party; why do you wish for change? Why do you wish to give the rule to untried men? Why should we change a way of government which has proved good in days of old?"

Caesar, struck into earnestness by this challenge, which he had never put to himself so clearly before, paused for thought, then spoke slowly, choosing his words.

"Because the world always changes," he said. "Rome has changed. She is no longer a small city fighting for her existence, but mistress of the world. The civilised world is ruled by the Senate of Rome, and the Senate to-day is ruled by a handful of patrician families who manipulate the elections for the benefit of their relatives. The means are too

narrow for the end. If they even ruled well ! But the oppression, the stupidity, the muddle, the waste of time ! It is an intolerable system, bound to change, for good or ill, just because it is intolerable."

"And you hope to change it for good ?" said Servilia.

"I intend to change it," drawled Caesar in a high mincing voice, looking down to hide the sudden intensity of his feeling.

"You are very ambitious," said Servilia.

"All Romans are," drawled Caesar cheerfully.

Servilia sighed. "And Sulla ?" she enquired.

"Sulla is trying to compress us into a still narrower mould, one we have outgrown these hundred years," said Caesar in a more natural tone, raising his eyes. "It will break the sooner."

"It is easier to break than to make," said Servilia. "And if change means merely greater luxury, greater bodily comfort, I do not like it. I think with Plato, that the proper jewels of the soul are temperance, justice, courage, nobility and truth."

The young man felt a little taken aback, as if he had been asked to swallow something too large for him, but he rallied his forces promptly. "Those virtues can only flourish beneath a good system of government," he said. "The change I propose will allow them a freer growth."

"Then the gods grant you may effect it," said Servilia earnestly. "Let me cite Plato once again, and say: The venture is a glorious one."

She rose, and with her quiet candid smile bade her guest good night. The old aunt was asleep already. Servilia bent over her to rouse her, and Caesar offered his arm to help her to her feet. Their hands touched; a flame flew through the young man's fingers.

Caesar's bed was somewhat hard, and his room somewhat cold, with a country smell of hay about it; the rain was still heavy outside, and poured noisily off the roof into the

impluvium. Altogether everything in Servilia's home was very simple, very comfortless and rural. But Caesar was happy in all this; it was agreeable to his highest feelings, he truly loved it, found it deeply good and honest, like Servilia. She had touched all the finer springs of his nature; he no longer doubted either his own destiny or that of the Republic. "Ah, Rome, Rome!" he thought, stretching his arms above his head in an ardour of ambition on his herb-filled mattress: "Ah, my beloved Rome, I shall save you yet!"

Next morning he made his way to the sea-coast, meaning to leave Italy till the Sullan tyranny should be past.

A GENERAL AND A PLUTOCRAT

FILLETS OF WHITE WOOL and garlands of flowers decked the door-posts of one of the houses on the Palatine hill in Rome, and from these, the sound of flutes within and the bustle of men and torches about the entrance, it was evident that the wedding feast of a person of rank was being celebrated. Indeed the number of lictors passing in and out hinted that the Dictator himself was gracing the nuptials. But the occasional bursts of laughter which reached the ears of passers-by in the street seemed to lack true merriment; they had an uneasy and constrained ring, and began and ended suddenly, as if at a signal, or as if none dare laugh or cease to laugh without the support of his fellows.

And indeed the feast, despite the lofty rank of the guests and the high ceremony of the entertainment, was not a particularly happy one. Since the Dictator was present, the recent sumptuary law must be strictly observed, but though the resulting moderation of wine and viand may have spoiled the enjoyment of some of the guests, it was not this which weighed so heavily on the spirits of the bridegroom—he viewed luxury with a soldier's eye, and allotted no more than their proper place to the pleasures of the table. But there were too many awkward circumstances about the marriage to allow him to rejoice whole-heartedly, however hard he tried. The young husband concealed his inward perturbation beneath a haughty air, but from time to time, as he glanced at his bride, reclining on his breast in her fringed and beribboned marriage tunic, he repressed a sigh with difficulty. She had just the kind of cheap prettiness he

disliked: a round head on a thin neck, with plump pasty cheeks and slightly protruding teeth which gave her an air of innocence quite unwarranted and a tiresome lisp—really if she had not been Sulla's step-daughter one would have thought her more than a little vulgar. As it was, of course, one could not help feeling glad that Sulla thought one of sufficient importance to be attached to him by marriage; Sulla was even perhaps a little afraid of one's prowess and reputation, thought Pompey proudly.

It was certainly an honour for a young man of twenty-four, by birth belonging only to the equestrian order, to be urged by a patrician to divorce his wife and take his step-daughter as a bride; and when the patrician was Sulla—well, one just accepted the match gratefully; it was really a duty to take a course which would provide one with such enlarged opportunities of serving the Republic. Certainly it was awkward that the step-daughter concerned was already married to another man and even pregnant by him; she was snivelling about it now beneath her saffron veil, thought Pompey irritably. He was never quite sure whether in Sulla's planning of this match there were not, after all, something ironic, something derogatory to his young general's dignity; nothing could have been more liberal than the dowry arrangements, yet, as he looked across the table at the Dictator now, he still was doubtful. Above his crumpled and wine-soiled toga Sulla's bloated mulberry face, his dishevelled red hair streaked with grey, his nodding head and bloodshot light-blue eyes, seemed even less reassuring than usual; as he sprawled, rather than reclined, eating rapidly his portion of roast peacock, he looked debauched, obscene and almost insolently powerful, a fit object for some striking vengeance of the gods. Pompey, who had a deep respect for decency and order, disliked the spectacle presented by his new father-in-law at a feast intensely. But one must close one's eyes to these surface defects, thought Pompey, controlling his imagination sternly; one must remember only that

Sulla was the Senate's champion, the man who had suppressed all that treacherous Popular agitation which was ruining the State, and restored the powers of the Senate to what they had been in the good old days of Rome's greatness; no nonsense about free corn and the powers of the tribunes would outlive Sulla's rule. One must put the public good before one's private enjoyment, thought Pompey again sternly, looking down his nose; it was a pity this Aemilia seemed so unattractive, but after all there were plenty of other women in the world, there was always, for instance, Flora. He should miss Antistia, of course—and his mind flew off to all the circumstances of his marriage to Antistia.

How happy he had been that day! His childhood and early youth had been made wretched by that vulgar, stamping, equivocal and avaricious man, his father; the soldiers hated him because he embezzled their wages, and Pompey was frightfully ashamed of his unpopularity. There had been a time when his men actually plotted to murder Pompeius Strabo and desert the standards; his son had saved the situation then by throwing himself down in the gate of the camp, weeping and appealing to the soldiers personally; people sometimes complimented him on this incident, but Pompey was ashamed of it, coloured angrily when it was mentioned and longed for it to be forgotten. Then his father was struck by lightning during the siege of Rome; Pompey was horrified by his own gladness, still more horrified by what he felt when the soldiers in a fury dragged his father's body from the bier—he agreed with their estimate of Strabo, but how humiliating to be obliged to despise one's father!

Yes, all that part of his life was wretched, and the next part began even less auspiciously, for he was accused in the courts of possessing property which his father had diverted from the State treasury to his own use. He defended himself stoutly, but felt sick at heart. And then suddenly his affairs took a favourable turn; Antistius the praetor, the chief judge in his case, took a fancy to him. Never should Pompey forget

the soothing, the assuagement, of that moment when as he left the court one afternoon he felt a hand laid quietly on his shoulder, and looking round, saw Antistius smiling cheerfully and kindly on him. He dined with Antistius that day, and in the upshot was offered his quiet, sweet-faced daughter. The joy of knowing that he had a friend, that someone considered him handsome and promising and respectable ! The betrothal was supposed to be kept secret till after the termination of the trial, but somehow it leaked out, for when Antistius pronounced the sentence of acquittal the watching crowd ironically shouted the chorus of the wedding song : *Talasio !* Pompey had blushed and hung his head, but everyone else laughed heartily ; the lad was a good lad, they said, and would do well, and why should his career be ruined for the sake of a few bits of hunting-tackle unlawfully intercepted by that cross-grained squinting Strabo ? The lad would make a very suitable son-in-law to Antistius, who did well to bring him off safe from the accusation. So after a moment Pompey laughed too, and the crowd accompanied him home, singing the wedding song cheerfully.

And after that everything went well. Pompey's brown eyes brightened now, and he moved impulsively on his couch, as he remembered those golden mornings in his native Picenum when somehow he suddenly found himself at the head of an increasing force of men to take to Sulla. He had felt that it would be unspeakably sordid just to turn up in Sulla's camp alone, an unknown young man of doubtful integrity and no reputation : and his years of humiliation with Strabo had taught him to loathe anything sordid. He longed, with a wistful, passionate longing, to deserve well of the Republic, to show himself as he really was, good, honest and brave ; and so he just walked into the council-chambers of the Picenan towns, and explained in his fresh young voice, his young face very earnest, what a good thing it would be for Rome if they all sent detachments to Sulla, and with a sigh of relief the burgesses had allowed the handsome lad to settle

their political perplexities for them thus, and soon he had quite an army of eager young men, splendidly equipped and full of spirit. They met a muddled corrupt badly led legion of the Marian Popular party, and Pompey with a thrill of pride gave the signal to attack and led his army into battle; he knew his young men were going to win, and they did; it was quite easy. They did it again just as easily, and then Pompey heard that Sulla was marching rapidly towards him, fearing for his safety amongst all these Marian forces; rather irritated, Pompey attacked the last army that was left, in a hurry, meaning to dispose of them all before Sulla came up to him. There had been just a moment or two when he was afraid he wasn't going to win this time, but he redoubled his exertions and all the others did the same, and they won and rode joyously off to meet Sulla, and he was amazed by their victories and the fine appearance of the men, and actually dismounted from his horse and greeted Pompey as Imperator! It was a glorious moment! And then there were further victories in Gaul, by the side of dull old Metellus, who quite brightened up under the influence of his young co-general. This marriage to-day was the result, the climax, of all this favouring fortune, and it was childish to indulge these uncomfortable regrets about it, decided Pompey. All the same, though it was not Pompey's fault that the Marians, with Brutus at their head, had murdered Antistia's father on account of his relationship to Pompey, just at the very moment when he was divorcing her, it was sad for Antistia, reflected Pompey mournfully. He wished very much that the gods had allowed him to remain her husband.

The slaves were now handing sweetmeats, and Pompey observed with displeasure that his new wife inclined to be greedy with the cheesecakes; "it is because she is carrying a child," an inner voice prompted him, and he winced. His impulse was always to bear himself more haughtily when his pride was touched, and he raised his head now, gazing along the couches where reclined his numerous and brilliant

guests, with a look of affable condescension. His eye met that of Marcus Licinius Crassus—who was seated at his host's table—and shed a little of its affability. That broad domed head with its thin greasy hair, that fixed smile and inscrutable beady glance, that short solid body, always had the power to annoy Pompey. Crassus, a man seven years older than himself and of more distinguished birth, though they both belonged to the order of equites, which came between the patricians and the plebeians, was jealous of his military success, and that should have been agreeable; but there was something so incurably prosaic about the man that Pompey always felt soiled and lowered in his presence. He viewed everything so differently and yet so much more shrewdly than Pompey, seeing always an ignoble commercial aspect to which Pompey was contemptuously blind, that it was really most exasperating; members of a great Roman family ought not to be like that, thought the sentimental Pompey resentfully. The equites provided by tradition the financiers of the Roman State, but there was no need to behave like a huckster on that account, surely! Pompey thought he saw now, for example, that Crassus' eyes were resting appraisingly on Aemilia's wedding necklace of gold and pearl-studded girdle—they were certainly worth a fortune, but to be envied on their account formed no part of Pompey's ambition; the notion was repulsive to him. He moved irritably, and felt a desire to say something provoking to Crassus. Just at this moment, however, the slave in attendance by Crassus' couch murmured in his master's ear; it seemed that someone waited without to see him, for Crassus, smoothly apologising and smiling his fixed inscrutable smile, asked to be excused from the table for a moment to deal with urgent affairs, had his sandals put on swiftly and left the room. As soon as his back was turned, amused and meaning glances were exchanged between the guests.

"Is somebody's house on fire, I wonder?" enquired young Faustus Sulla, the Dictator's son, with an innocent air.

There was a general laugh. Pompey, however, did not understand the allusion, and seeing that her host had a puzzled look, the lady sitting on his right explained: "Crassus buys burning houses cheap, repairs them and sells them at a profit."

"Sometimes to their original owners," added Faustus amid further laughter.

"Does he do so, indeed?" exclaimed Pompey, shocked.

"He buys the estates of the proscribed cheap too," said the husband of the guest who had first spoken, with a timid glance, however, in the direction of Sulla.

"Having put their names on the list first," said the irrepressible Faustus.

"Enough!" exclaimed Sulla at this. Raising himself with an effort on his elbow, and striking the table violently with his open hand, so that the silver service danced, he glared round at his fellow-guests, who took care to avoid his blood-shot eye.

There was an uneasy silence for a moment; then someone tried to break it tactfully, by complimenting Pompey on his cook's treatment of almond tarts. Pompey, rather insulted than pleased by a reference he thought undignified, looked down his nose and smiled stiffly, and the silence fell again. All were relieved, therefore, though surprised, when on the return of Crassus to his couch, Sulla observed in a tone of heavy raillery, his diseased head nodding as he spoke:

"And whose estate have you been buying this time, Crassus?"

It seemed to Pompey that if such a question had been addressed thus publicly to him, he would have died of shame, but Crassus replied in his usual discreet but cheerful tones:

"Nobody's, sir; I rejected the bargain as an unsafe speculation."

His calm assumption that such matters were fit subject for discussion at a Roman's table amused the guests, who

laughed beneath their breath and whispered ribald comments. Even Sulla gave a twisted smile, and continued in his grating tones:

"Wasn't the price low enough?"

"No," replied Crassus thoughtfully. At this the guests' laughter could no longer be restrained, but burst out loud and long, Sulla himself joining in it heartily. Crassus looked up, startled but apparently not even yet insulted. "That is, yes," he corrected himself. The laughter broke out louder than before, and Crassus at last seemed touched—possibly he thought his business wisdom questioned. "The estate belonged to one of the proscribed who is likely to be pardoned," he protested, forgetting his habitual discretion in his pique.

"Indeed? Indeed?" said Sulla in an ominous tone, amid a sudden silence. "And who is this lucky man, if I may be permitted to enquire?"

"Young Caius Caesar," replied Crassus in a non-committal tone, colouring a little as he perceived his blunder, but making no apology. "It is said the Vestal Virgins are interceding for his life."

"The more fools they!" shouted Sulla in a sudden rage. His head nodded uncontrollably, his hands crisped the folds at his breast. "They are fools, fools, to ask for that lad's life; there is more harm to Rome in that boy, with his loose toga and his Popular ideas——" He stopped, spluttering, choked with saliva.

"He always seems to me a very ordinary dissipated young man," observed Sulla's wife Metella, soothingly. "The kind of youth against whom the sumptuary laws are particularly directed, no doubt, but too silly to be dangerous."

"There is more danger for Rome in that ill-girt boy than in a hundred such as Marius," resumed Sulla in a tone of angry gloom. "He has a mind of his own, and a will to back it; he cares nothing for life unless it gives him what he wants, and so will stake it readily. I was like that when I was

a lad," he muttered abruptly, looking aside. No one spoke, and after a moment the Dictator recovered himself. "Let them have his life if they want, the fools!" he sneered. "They'll regret it when I'm no longer here to protect them. Caesar's quality is too rare in Rome nowadays for other men to be safe with it. If he chose, he could crack the Senate with his finger-nail, like a louse."

The Dictator's words were received with a respectful, if dissenting, silence. The meal had now reached its last course; Pompey signed to his head servant, the handsome Greek Demetrius, and the slaves handed towels and finger-bowls.

"And what other news had you from your client, Crassus?" demanded Sulla, panting a little from his recent outburst.

"Some that concerns our newly married husband here," said Crassus, turning to Pompey with malice gleaming in his beady eyes. "Calpurnia has made away with herself by taking poison."

"Which Calpurnia?" demanded Pompey hoarsely, though he guessed.

"Your first wife's mother," replied Crassus smoothly. "Thus Antistia is bereft of father, mother and husband, all in a mere half-year! What will happen to her estate, I wonder? Well, so perish all the followers of that old wolf Marius!"

"So perish all who wish to destroy the Republic!" agreed Pompey firmly; but his lips quivered, and he could not look Crassus in the eye.

Suddenly a loud hoarse moan broke violently on the air. Horribly startled, Pompey looked down at the girl on his breast, from whose pale and distorted lips the distressful sound was still issuing; her eyes were closed, her cheeks like wax; her hands beat the air convulsively. The guests started up in alarm; Pompey, striving to disentangle himself from the couch without disturbing Aemilia, disarranged his

clothes and the nuptial sheepskin on which they were reclining, and added embarrassment to his disgust and fright.

"There is no cause for alarm—it is only the heat of the room and the excitement have upset her," cried Metella, hurrying to her daughter's side. "Carry her quickly to a cooler room."

Always prompt to action when he knew what that action should be, Pompey picked up his bride from the couch, sheepskin and all, and followed his mother-in-law out through the confused throng of guests and slaves. Everyone they met fell back with looks of horror, and murmured prayers to avert the omen. Metella made towards the marriage bed of ivory, magnificent in coverings of purple and gold and strewn with flowers for the occasion, which stood in the atrium; but Demetrius, seeing the look of distaste on his master's face, cried: "This way, madam!" and shepherded the procession into a small side room. He commanded lights and sent for women slaves, while Pompey laid his burden on the bed and seated himself beside her. The girl's shuddering moans had stilled, and she seemed to have come to herself again; she clutched at Pompey's hand in icy fingers, and cried: "No, no, no!" staring at him with wide terror-stricken eyes.

"What is the matter, my dear?" said the soft-hearted Pompey kindly—though privately he thought it was the cheese cakes. "You are among friends—your mother is here, and I, your husband."

"No, no! It is displeasing to the gods," cried Aemilia wildly.

"What?" demanded the troubled Pompey.

"Our marriage," cried Aemilia. "I am torn from my husband, and that poor girl, your wife!" She burst into anguished tears. "It is displeasing to the gods to cause such suffering; no good will come of our union."

"Now, child," began Metella from the foot of the bed. Her harangue was interrupted, however, by a piercing

scream from her daughter, who suddenly tossed herself wildly from side to side and was as suddenly rigid. "Mother, Mother!" cried the wretched girl. Metella's look of lofty vexation changed to concern. She came quickly round to the side of the bed and bent over her daughter. "Go, go," she urged Pompey. "Leave us and send my women; send too for my husband's physician."

"But what is the matter?" demanded Pompey, dissatisfied. "What ails her?"

"A miscarriage perhaps," breathed Metella confidentially.

Humiliated and angry, Pompey returned to the banquet room, where his guests were standing about in groups, refraining in a well-bred way from discussing the incident, but perplexed whether to go or stay. Pompey apologised courteously, in a steady tone, for his wife's indisposition, which he said was slight; but by the burning flush on his cheek and the frown on his brow they judged otherwise, and made their farewells. The Dictator's litter was summoned, and he prepared to go; his wife had left her daughter for a moment to hint to him what was wrong, and now he laid one of his small-boned aristocratic hands on Pompey's shoulder and expressed friendly regrets.

"But perhaps it will prove all for the best," he leered, his diseased head a-quiver. "You will have a child of your own the sooner."

Pompey, who certainly felt no particular goodwill for Aemilia's present child, but was shocked by this blunt suggestion that he should profit by its loss of life, felt his cheek burn again; and Sulla laughed and went away nodding.

The summoned physician, Sulla's freedman, arrived, and began to attend to Aemilia, whose screams of agony did not, however, for some time diminish. Pompey felt himself a stranger in his own house on his wedding night; women hurried about carrying bowls and cloths, they brushed past

him without a word of excuse, and if he attempted to approach the sick room, stared at him indignantly. He did not cease to enquire regularly how it went with his wife, however; it troubled him to think of her in torment. But at last, in the early hours of the morning, when he rose again from his bed to seek news of Aemilia, who was now ominously silent, the women about the door drew back for him with a look of commiserating awe, and Metella came to meet him with tears in her eyes. In answer to his question, she merely shook her head and turned away despairingly.

Pompey wandered away into the dining-hall, where slaves were still busy removing the traces of the banquet, amid the guttering wedding candles. Demetrius, his gown drawn over his fair smooth head, was lounging insolently on the couch previously occupied by Sulla, giving languid directions; he had not even troubled to remove his sandals, and as a result a long tear disfigured the silk mattress. He also omitted to rise at the entrance of his master. Pompey surveyed him with gloomy displeasure, but did not rebuke him; Pompey hated to rebuke, could hardly indeed drag the words of a remonstrance from his lips unless he lashed himself into a temper first, for rebukes seemed to him essentially low and sordid, reminded him too much of his detested father. Demetrius was insolent, he knew it; but then he was entirely in his master's interest—one could rely on his devotion as one never could on that of an independent equal. It soothed Pompey, after a struggle with an indocile world outside, to discuss business with Demetrius, whose only hope of freedom and advancement lay in his master. Demetrius was shrewd, too; Pompey was still surprised by the frequency with which his prophecies of men's baseness proved correct. The slave now belatedly swung his feet round to the floor, and rose. Pompey seated himself on the wedding couch and stared ahead with unseeing eyes.

"She is dying, Demetrius," he observed gloomily.

Demetrius, who thought the death of one not very pretty

woman mattered little, shrugged his shoulders indifferently. He repressed, however, the obscene jest which rose to his lips; he knew very well the limits of his master's indulgence, and where he must not be offended. If he sometimes felt contempt for the timid decency which governed Pompey's character once he was off the battlefield, he also felt respect and affection. It was impossible not to be fond of the well-meaning and honest Pompey; there was an essential mild dignity about him which no insolence from less good men could destroy.

A sudden wail of women from within announced that the wretched girl's life was indeed over. Pompey started uncontrollably, and turned a look of anguish on Demetrius.

"Let me bring you a bowl of wine, master," urged the slave in his soothing Grecian tones, bending sympathetically towards him. "So great a trouble is beyond the highest courage to endure."

Pompey waved this suggestion away with an impatient hand. At once he felt better, more himself, for having refused a base alleviation to his grief; and this was perhaps what Demetrius intended.

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TWO REPUBLICANS

ALTHOUGH it was yet barely dawn, there was a pattering and whispering in the streets of Rome, and as the light grew stronger, figures could be seen scurrying round every corner, holding their togas up out of the dust anxiously with one hand. Among these, clients hurrying to the morning levee of their noble patrons, two figures were noticeable of a different type, and proceeding at a more dignified pace. One was a boy about fourteen years old, solidly built, with a thatch of tangled hair and a square high-coloured face; the golden disc at his throat, and his purple-bordered toga, showed that he belonged to a family of senatorial rank, and his plain large features wore at the moment a look of arrogant displeasure. Seeing one of the early clients approaching him at a great pace, glancing back over his shoulder the while, he made no attempt to avoid his path, but rather sought the encounter; their arms jarred, and Cato's heavy mouth opened in a guffaw as the man, muttering a curse, paused to readjust the elaborate folds at his breast, which the collision had disarranged. The boy's companion, an elderly Greek slave of pedagogic appearance, who limped respectfully a few steps in his rear, sighed at this and shook his head in gentle reproof; Cato laughed again harshly, and moved on with his former slow arrogant step.

The sun was now fully risen, and clear bright light filled the air; the columns and arches, the flights of stairs, the cornices and the statues, of the temples and buildings of mighty Rome, rose up calm and white and stately against the cloudless blue sky. The grey-haired schoolmaster sighed with

pleasure at so much beauty, and wished that their journey might not reach its end too soon, but remembering their errand, he began mildly to urge upon his pupil—who stalked on morosely, unseeing either city or sun—the need for haste.

“There’s time enough,” replied Cato disagreeably without quickening his pace.

The streets were now growing busy with the ordinary traffic of the day, and the shops were opening, but no clients were any longer to be seen; they had all reached their patrons’ houses and gone within. Sarpedon respectfully pointed this out to his young master.

“Am I Sulla’s client?” cried Cato, turning on him wrathfully. “Do you want me to be kept waiting at his door?”

“It is a great honour to be sent for by the Dictator,” suggested the Greek mildly.

“An honour? For a Cato?” cried the boy. “O!” Inarticulate with rage, he clenched his fist and struck the slave a hard blow on the arm. Sarpedon sighed reproachfully but said nothing, and the pair moved on. To the school-master’s relief, Cato’s anger quickened his step without his knowing it, and they soon saw in the distance the Dictator’s house, recognisable from afar by the crowd clustered round the door.

“We are not too late, then,” thought the Greek, pleased, but he judged it best not to say this aloud, and was glad of his silence when they drew near and saw of what the crowd consisted. A group of soldiers were trying to tear away a woman, who hung on the neck of her husband, weeping; the man—a Roman of equestrian rank, by his dress—was pale and dishevelled, and had a wound on his head from which blood was oozing; his face was drawn with terror, and his wrists bore chains. He was evidently one of the proscribed; captured, identified and within a few minutes of execution. The soldiers, growing rough out of vexation, threw the woman on the ground and marched

their prisoner away; the rabble which such incidents always collected followed in an uneasy silence. Sarpedon hurried Cato past them, and gave his name to the janitor, who at once ushered them into the atrium, but made no attempt to present them to the Dictator in person.

The place was crowded, but at the moment of their entry, silent—something seemed in progress in the recess at the far end which drew everyone's attention. A late-comer, pushing in after them, jostled Cato and pressed on without a word of apology; whereupon the boy exclaimed angrily and began to use his own elbows to make his way. His determined attack brought him some resentful glances—which he returned unabashed—but secured places for himself and Sarpedon almost at the edge of the open space in front of Sulla, who was seated in a high chair, rather as if presiding at a court of justice, nodding his diseased head and listening to the proceedings of an auctioneer. Bids for small sums came often from the crowd, amid laughter, and Sulla himself wore a grim smile on his mulberry face.

"What are they doing?" demanded Cato gruffly.

"They are selling the property of one of the proscribed," replied Sarpedon in an uneasy whisper.

"That man outside?" demanded Cato.

At the slave's nod he scowled.

The property fell to one of Sulla's freedmen for a ludicrously small price, and the auction was over; before the open space could fill an effeminate looking Roman in a very wide-cut toga seized his opportunity, and begged permission to read to Sulla a poem in his honour, composed by himself. As Sulla said nothing, merely regarding him with a sardonic smile, the poet ran his hand through his hair, and in a whining voice began to declaim, referring from time to time to a rather large roll of manuscript which he held elegantly at arms' length in both hands. The verses were execrable, and Sarpedon at least was not surprised when the Dictator, exclaiming "Enough,

enough!" suddenly leaned forward and struck the paper to the ground. The poet stood gaping and disconcerted, and Sulla with a smile went on abruptly: "Give him the price of the auction." The poet exclaimed with delight, and the dismay cleared from his face like clouds from the sky at sunrise. "Provided," continued the Dictator, smiling still more affably, "that he never versifies again." The resulting laughter was not merely sycophantic, for the rapid change of expressions on the poet's face had been so ludicrous that even Cato could not forbear a grudging smile; Sarpedon thought the moment favourable for presenting his pupil, and pushed him in front of the Dictator's chair. Sulla, after a quick glance at the boy, cocked his eye upward to the slave placed beside his chair to remind him of his callers' identity, who promptly supplied Cato's name.

"Ah, Marcus Porcius Cato," said the Dictator, considering him with a thoughtful air.

Cato faced him squarely, very firmly planted on his feet, which, as his habit was, rested a little apart. "It is a name not unknown in Roman history," he said in a loud harsh voice.

"Very true," agreed Sulla courteously.

"You sent for me," continued Cato in his surly tones.

"Yes—I believe the lads have chosen you to be their captain in the sacred 'Troy' games," said Sulla smoothly.

"Yes," said Cato.

"You are to lead one side, and my nephew the other," continued the Dictator.

Sarpedon nudged his pupil, for there was an opening here for a pleasing compliment, but his prompting was vain. Cato merely replied: "Yes," as stolidly as before.

"They rejected Pompey's nephew and preferred you, I believe," continued Sulla, amused by the lad's surliness and wishing to see what he would say.

Cato flushed and scowled. "Yes," he said at last reluctantly.

"I offer my congratulations," said Sulla in a silky tone.

Cato hesitated as if about to speak, but seemed to decide against it, and remained silent.

"Well," said Sulla, giving him up and adopting a formal and indifferent manner: "Tell me, what progress are you making in your studies? How does he progress?" he added, turning to the slave.

"Oh, nothing could be more satisfactory!" lied Sarpedon with enthusiasm. A sudden spark in the Dictator's blue eyes warned him that truth was safer, and he explained hastily: "He learns slowly, but never forgets what he has once learned."

"And I can see he has learned the precepts of his great-grandfather the Censor," commented Sulla. He spoke on a mocking note, and there was a general titter, for the manners of the famous old Stoic had left much to be desired, and the allusion to those of his descendant was obvious. "Well," continued Sulla, leaning forward and speaking more earnestly, "here is something else for you to remember, Marcus Cato: the Senate and the Roman People." He used the ordinary form of the words, which were to be seen on every official document, heard in every public affair, and the boy felt choked with rage and shame at being taken for such a dullard as not to know them. "The Senate is the head, the people the body, of the Republic," continued Sulla, "and it is the duty of the head to rule." Suddenly his attention relaxed, his head began to nod again, and a look of weary irritation crossed his face; he made a slight movement with one hand, and Sarpedon interpreted this rightly as their dismissal, and urged Cato away.

He was glad enough to do this in any case, for he marked the boy's deepened colour and fiery eye, and dreaded some dangerous explosion of wrath—only Cato's unreadiness with words, he knew, restrained him; nothing else ever kept him from speaking his mind. He gently shepherded his young master down the long atrium, and got him out to the

entrance passage with a sigh of relief. There, however, a disagreeable sight met their eyes. A patrician in military dress, who stood by the door talking to one of Sulla's officers, swung in his hand by the hair a dissevered head, from which great goutts of blood dropped slowly on the tiled floor. In spite of the staring eyes and the dropped and livid cheeks, the face was recognisable as that of the man they had seen alive at this door, parting from his wife, within the hour, and the tender-hearted Greek shuddered and averted his glance as they passed. Cato, however, eyed the ghastly object sternly, without blenching. But no sooner were they clear of the house, than the boy turned to his attendant and demanded savagely:

"Why does nobody kill this Sulla?"

"Hush, child!" whispered Sarpedon, terrified. "Come away!"

Cato suffered himself to be led, but repeated: "Why does nobody kill that man?" His voice was so thick and his step so uncertain that Sarpedon glanced at him in dismay, and saw that he was labouring under an indignation so intense that it almost deprived him of his faculties. His face was swollen and purple with rage and his yellowish eyes bloodshot and staring. "Why does nobody kill that Sulla?" he grated out again, and Sarpedon answered sadly:

"Because they fear him, child, more than they hate him."

"Fear him?" repeated Cato with scorn. "They *fear* him? Why don't you give *me* a sword, then, so that I can stab him, and free the Republic from this slavery?"

He stood still and glared at Sarpedon as if he expected to be handed a sword, and return to do the deed, immediately. There was no sword to be had, however—perhaps fortunately—and after a moment the boy turned in the direction of his home, and began to stride along in his heavy awkward gait.

"That he should dare to recommend the Senate and the

Republic to me," he muttered furiously. "That he should dare ! The tyrant ! A self-made Dictator, wielding unlawful authority, a man who compelled Rome to accept his rule by force of arms !"

"He did it to save Rome from the excesses of the Popular party," objected Sarpedon.

"Two wrongs do not make a right," said Cato in a sombre tone.

"True—but they should be endured as becomes a Roman," observed Sarpedon, seeing an opportunity to resume the schoolmaster. "Your manner to the Dictator lacked suavity and urbanity, Marcus Porcius ; such rudeness was the behaviour of a child, not of a Roman."

"What does a Greek slave know of what becomes a Roman ?" muttered Cato.

"I am your praeceptor," said Sarpedon with an air of mild dignity.

"In my great-grandfather's days, children were taught by their fathers, not by Greek slaves," said Cato roughly. "We should keep to the old ways and the old virtues, if we want to keep the Republic. A Roman cannot learn to be free, from a slave."

Sarpedon sighed. "The Greeks knew how to be free before the Romans, and better than the Romans," he thought wistfully, but he knew his master's temper too well to say so.

They had now reached the Forum, which was crowded and bustling, for the hour of public business had begun. The Senate was in session that day, and all the men of note whom the proscription had left to Rome were to be seen, escorted by their friends and clients, sweeping through on their way up to the Senate-house, while other similar groups escorted defendants and accusers to the law courts on the right. It was difficult to make any rapid progress through the crowd, and Cato, feeling that Sarpedon wished him to make haste, with characteristic perversity went even

more slowly than he need. Sarpedon was indeed anxious lest, if Sulla decided to come to the Senate and his procession overtook them in the Forum, his young pupil should make some adverse demonstration and pay for it dearly. For the last few moments he had thought he heard distant sounds confirming his fears, and now there was a sudden rush to the lower end of the Forum, a sudden pushing and craning of necks, which seemed to show for certain that the Dictator was expected. He glanced at his young master anxiously, but Cato fortunately appeared to have noticed nothing.

"Shall we turn aside and hear a law case for a while?" suggested Sarpedon timidly.

"Why?" said Cato with his habitual brusqueness.

"The praetor is trying a man from Umbria for murder, and the case involves Chrysogonus, Sulla's freedman, I hear," explained Sarpedon. "The accused's father was slain in the proscription, and Chrysogonus bought up his estate for a mere song; then, to keep possession of it, accused the son of his father's murder."

"Then the case will go against the man from Umbria," said Cato angrily.

"Not necessarily. I hear there is a new young orator, of some promise, defending him," said Sarpedon with eagerness.

Cato's face cleared a little. "Well! He has courage, at least, to take a case where he is bound to attack Sulla's favourite," he said. "*He* doesn't despair of the Republic, at all events."

"They say it's his first case, too," added Sarpedon.

"It will probably be his last," commented Cato grimly. "Well! Let us hear this brave man while he's still alive."

He threw the end of his toga more firmly over his shoulder and led the way up the steps into the court.

This too was crowded, and it was some time before the pair could secure a place whence they could see what was

going on, for Cato showed in this court of Roman justice none of the insolence he had displayed in the Dictator's house. Presently, however, they found themselves in a position behind one of the pillars from which with a little craning they could see the tribunal: the praetor seated in his curule chair, the long row of judges, the accused with dishevelled hair and toga purposely soiled to excite compassion, Chrysogonus at one side with an uneasy smirk on his fat oily face. The defender of the accused was on his feet at the moment: a young man, as Sarpedon had said, with a fresh colour, a thin neck, a wide flexible mouth and a voice which, by soaring up into unexpected shrillness, now and then excited the listening crowd to mirth. On the whole they attended respectfully, however, to the torrent of words which flowed without cessation from the young man's mouth; he was certainly fluent, decided Sarpedon, amused, listening to him with one ear, keeping the other for the growing acclamations outside which indicated Sulla's approach. For a moment he had a fear lest the Dictator might be coming to this court in defence of his favourite freedman, but the cheering diminished again: he had probably entered the Senate. And soon the Greek forgot the reason for their presence in the basilica, and listened only to what the young orator had to say. His indictment of the manœuvres of Sulla's favourite was fearfully telling, and to the audience's barely concealed joy, he brought to light certain facts of time and place which seemed to indicate that Chrysogonus was not even as innocent of the original murder as his prompting of the present accusation supposed. Between each fact the young orator skilfully introduced general sentiments of a lofty nature and patriotic references to the welfare of the Republic, which at once conciliated his hearers' sympathies and gave time for his damning evidence to sink in.

"Is it for this," he cried passionately, "that the nobility has roused itself, that it has recovered the Republic by arms and the sword—is it for this: that freedmen and slaves might

be able to maltreat the property of the nobles, and all your fortunes and ours at their pleasure? If that was their object, O judges, I confess that I erred in being anxious for their success. But if the victory of the nobles over the Popular party ought to be an ornament and an advantage to the Republic and the Roman people, then, too, my speech ought to be acceptable to every virtuous and noble man. But if there be anyone who thinks that he and his cause is injured when Chrysogonus is found fault with, he does not understand his cause, I may almost say he does not know himself. For the cause will be rendered more splendid by resisting every worthless man. The worthless favourers of Chrysogonus, who think that his cause and theirs are identical, are injured themselves by separating themselves from this splendour."

Cato raised himself on tiptoe and gazed at the orator avidly, his eyes wide, his heavy mouth open in a hopeful eager smile. "Who is he?" he demanded. "Sarpedon! Find out who this orator is."

"His name is Marcus Tullius Cicero," murmured Sarpedon. "A native of Arpinum, of equestrian rank."

"You ask, against whom do I say all this?" thundered Cicero in his most sonorous tones.

He paused dramatically, and stroked his chin with his left hand with a considering air; everyone present held his breath, and the praetor actually changed colour with suspense: would this audacious young man really dare to name the Dictator in this connection?

"Not against him whom you are meaning and thinking of," continued Cicero suavely, shaking his head with a roguish air: "For both my speech from the beginning, and also his own eminent virtue, have at all times acquitted Sulla."

The fickle crowd applauded loudly, in relief; Cato sank back on his heels, the light gone from his face.

"He speaks with a beautiful Latinity," said Sarpedon

admiringly. "Beautiful ! His gesture, too, is fine. If he can learn to control his voice a little better, he may be a great orator some day. A most eloquent speaker ! Beautiful Latin !"

" Words, words ! " said young Cato savagely, turning and stalking roughly through the crowd, which gave way before his air of birth and look of angry disappointment. " What's the use of words ? "

" His words may cost him his life," murmured Sarpedon.

" Nonsense ! Sulla won't trouble to do anything to *him*," said Cato contemptuously. " You can't save the Republic by fine speeches."

BOOK II

AND THIS THEIR WORLD

TRIUMPH

"BUT WHAT is there against my having a triumph?" demanded Pompey.

His tone was sulky, and a heavy pout disfigured his agreeable young face.

"A Roman general does not triumph for victories over Roman citizens," said Sulla wearily.

"But my victories in Numidia—I have made all Africa feel the might of Rome," protested Pompey.

"So did Scipio the Great, a hundred and twenty years before you," observed Sulla drily. "Not to mention other more recent generals, including myself."

At this there was subdued laughter and a movement of applause amongst the crowd of senators who were paying visits of ceremony to the Dictator at his seaside villa near Capua, and enjoying the soft southern sunshine in his garden court that morning. Sulla gave them an arch sideways glance from his blue eyes, and smiled, nodding his head, well pleased.

"Even the very beasts of Africa experienced the courage and good fortune of the Roman army," continued Pompey in a loud oratorical tone. He had said this before, to the officers of his legions in Africa, and it had gone down very well; it was not often he made a joke, and he thought this one too good to be wasted. "The lions and elephants themselves were subdued by our hunting." Nobody laughed, and Sulla, his eyebrows raised, surveyed him with a faint air of disgust. Pompey flushed; the joke certainly seemed less funny here than it had in Numidia; it even sounded a little

ridiculous. "I have brought elephants back with me for my triumph," he added, stung into defiance.

"My good young man," said Sulla, rousing himself: "Don't you know the constitution of the Republic? You had better go home and learn it. Or must I teach it to you? You have held no magistracy in the State, not even the lowest, that of quaestor; you are not indeed of an age to be in the Senate. Only consuls and praetors are permitted to hold triumphs; the great Scipio himself, whose victories excelled yours as the sun a candle, asked no triumph, because he had not held the curule office which would have entitled him to do so. You have received the name of Magnus for your exploits, surely that is enough? If I should recommend the Senate to decree you a triumph," he went on in a kinder tone, seeing the young general's distressed and angry look—"and doubtless the Senate would not weigh my recommendation lightly—consider what a weight of envy it would bring both upon my government and your honour!"

"And *you* should consider," muttered Pompey, holding his head down and almost sobbing with rage, "that more people worship the rising than the setting sun."

A startled movement, and a sudden widespread murmur amongst the assembled senators, revealed their wonder at the young man's temerity. "By Hercules, he's bold!" they whispered.

"What was that?" demanded Sulla, eyeing them sharply. "I didn't catch his words. What did he say?" He looked from one to another in question, but none of his guests dared repeat the insult to the Dictator, and even Pompey himself looked a little scared. "Will someone tell me what he said?" roared Sulla with one of his sudden outbursts of ferocity.

"He said: 'More people worship the rising than the setting sun,'" said young Faustus shrilly, lolling on the edge of his father's chair and shouting in his ear.

"What? What?" cried Sulla, utterly astounded. He looked quickly round the company, and saw from the general

air of embarrassment that his son had reported the truth. "Pompey's power is rising, and Sulla's setting, is that what he means?" he cried incredulously. "By my fortune, the lad is bold! Let him triumph, then. Yes, let him triumph, let him triumph," he repeated in a high peevish tone. A spasm of pain suddenly seized him, and he clutched at his stomach, writhing. "O, be off with you and triumph," he cried sardonically, waving his hand with an impatient air: "Since that's what you want, Cnaeus Pompey."

"Every Roman general wishes to triumph," declaimed Pompey.

"So much the worse for the Republic," said Sulla grimly, beginning to retch.

Pompey, disgusted as always by Sulla's ribald disregard for decency when it clashed with common sense, made his formal farewells hastily, then, adjusting his toga over his arm with a dignified air, stalked away through the assembled company, looking down his nose. None of those present offered to congratulate him, and many gave him black looks or averted their eyes as he passed; all returned his farewells coldly. But Pompey was too excited to care. He was to triumph, to triumph! He could hardly keep from shouting it out to everyone he met; he longed to tell the news to someone sympathetic, someone with whom he could relax without danger of ridicule.

Since, by the custom of the Republic, if he entered Rome he by so doing terminated his allotted military power (which held good only outside the walls), and thus forfeited his right to claim a triumph, he was obliged to remain out of the City till the matter was settled; he had therefore sent to Flora to come out to him, and she had established herself in an agreeable villa near Naples, overlooking the brilliant blue waters of the bay. Pompey had himself driven thither now. It was noon before he reached the place, and the sun and his own ardour made the blood beat thickly in his head; it was quite difficult to retain a proper dignity when at last he was

ushered respectfully into the house. The slave who took his toga said that his mistress was in the peristyle, and Pompey followed him there; on a low couch against a charming background of fluted pillars, rosebushes and fountains, lay Flora, in the loose green tunic she affected, her thick glossy curls spread out behind her over a flowered cushion. She was talking to Demetrius, who stood before her in an easy attitude, with his thumbs stuck into his belt. After a formal greeting, both looked at Pompey expectantly.

He suddenly felt shy about his great news.

"It seems I am to triumph," he said in an offhand tone.

"O, marvellous!" cried Flora delightedly, clapping her hands.

"But will the Senate really decree a thing so unprecedented, so outside the law?" queried Demetrius, amazed.

"The Senate will decree what Sulla orders," returned Pompey.

"The Senate will resent it," said Demetrius gloomily, shaking his head.

"You are not very happy in your congratulations, Demetrius," said Pompey peevishly.

The slave hastened to repair his error of tact. "I am so overpowered by the magnitude of the achievement that I hardly know what I say," he offered obsequiously. "To triumph before you are twenty-five years of age! Surely that has never happened before in the history of the Republic?"

"No, never!" cried Pompey joyously, for the first time giving free rein to his elation. "It has never happened to anyone before!" He threw himself down on Flora's couch, and clasped his hands behind his head. "I shall have my triumphal chariot drawn by four elephants instead of horses," he cried gleefully. "That'll annoy the Senate and show them how much I care."

"But could four elephants abreast pass through the triumphal gate?" objected Demetrius. "I doubt if even

two. . . . Elephants," he explained, smiling and sketching the curves of the beast with his hands, "are so *wide*."

Flora's cheerful laughter shook the air, but Pompey felt annoyed.

"The matter can be put to the test secretly," he said in an injured tone. "Of course I shall attempt nothing derogatory to the dignity of a general."

Flora raised herself on her elbow and looked at him fondly. He was so exactly her idea of what a young man should be—his body so strong and shapely, his brown eyes so kind, his breath so sweet, his young face, now somewhat clouded with disappointment about the elephants, so candid, his skin so fresh and clear—that she felt she could eat him for very love. Her heart yearned over him, she felt as if her very bones melted; if the darling boy wanted elephants to draw his chariot, though the world fell, elephants he must have.

"You could take the wall down to make more room," she cried impulsively.

It was now the men's turn to be amused.

"Take down a stone of Rome's sacred walls?" laughed Pompey, putting up a finger to stroke her rosy cheek. "My dear girl! Don't be so absurd."

"If they can break a law to give you a triumph, they can surely break a bit of wall," persisted Flora, forgetting her Roman accent in her zeal.

"Women don't understand these matters," said Pompey mildly.

"I understand *you*," said Flora in a tender tone; and bending over him till his face was buried in her rich golden curls, she pressed her warm full lips on his. Pompey smiled and kissed her tenderly in return, but his eyes were preoccupied; he was still busy comparing the dimensions of an African elephant with those of the Porta Capena in Rome.

The day appointed for Pompey's triumph came at last,

and all Rome seethed with excitement. The temple doors all stood open; every altar smoked with incense, garlands wreathed every shrine. The City was astir before dawn with groups of citizens in holiday attire hurrying in different directions. Some wished to hear the general's exhortation to his soldiers on the plain outside Rome and witness his presentation of rewards; these were chiefly the relatives of the soldiers concerned. Some wished to see Pompey's reception at the gate by the whole Senate, for there the notabilities of the day would be all on show together; others lined the route of the procession, thronging the Via Sacra and the slopes of the Capitoline hill, while the lucky ones secured positions on the steps of the public buildings in the Forum. The day was bright but cold, March by the faulty calendar but winter by the true season of the year; and at first there was a good deal of stamping of feet and rubbing of hands and jesting murmurs against the general, that he had not delayed the occasion till the sun was higher in the sky. But presently, as the crowd grew denser, there was no lack of warmth; every man was wedged tightly between his neighbours, and an odour of sweat and damp wool began to load the air. Still the crowd grew, as those coming in from the country to see the show arrived; and the streets became so packed that the richer citizens, who now appeared, had difficulty in making their way to the stands erected for the occasion. "Now we shan't be long," thought the watching crowd in the Forum, seeing the stands fill; but for another hour nothing happened, and they began to grow restless and ill-tempered.

"He seems a bit long-winded, I think, this Pompey," complained a bent little shoemaker, on whose arm was slung a basket containing wine and provisions, from which he continually munched.

"Not he! It's the Senate falling over their own feet," said his neighbour staunchly, a fuller by the colour of his fingers.

"I'm not so sure—I've been told there's a good deal of

grumbling in the army over the size of his donation," piped the shoemaker.

"Well, if the army grumbles they're in the right, you can be sure of that," said a big bearded man of military bearing who stood behind them, loudly.

"Pompey's a fine soldier all the same," protested the fuller. "We want more generals of his sort, abstemious and honest."

"Why, what has Pompey ever done, eh?" growled the old soldier menacingly. "Caius Marius wasn't good enough for you, I suppose?"

His threatening tone, and the introduction of the forbidden name of the dead hero of the Popular party, cowed his hearers. Through the mind of each there passed the thought: These veterans are a real nuisance; they're always wanting land after their campaigns, and then tire of it as soon as they have it; they're always turbulent, always ready for a riot; better not to cross them. And they held their peace.

It was now almost noon, when a sudden movement rippled through the crowd; there was evidently some tidings at last of the procession's approach, for everyone began to stand on tiptoe, turn their heads and crane their necks.

"There go the trumpets!" exclaimed the veteran, throwing up his head as if sniffing the familiar sound joyfully.

"I heard nothing," piped the shoemaker.

"You wouldn't know a trumpet from a flute," said the veteran with contempt.

"There they are!" they all shouted suddenly together.

The harsh clangour was indeed now unmistakable, and the next moment the first of the Senate came round the corner. Venerable and dignified, in their robes of office, they passed slowly along on foot; the crowd applauded respectfully, and greeted the most famous by name; those thus favoured slightly bowed and lifted their hands gravely in reply.

"Strikes me they don't look too pleased about it all," said the fuller. "Jealous, perhaps."

"Ah, they're a haughty lot," said the Marian veteran bitterly, spitting.

Next came the trumpeters, nearly deafening the onlookers with their long blasts, and after that the waggons laden with spoils taken from the conquered enemy. These were rather disappointing both in amount and kind; there were a few fine specimens of silver-work, a pile of richly coloured carpets at which the fuller gaped eagerly, and some big black and yellow jars, but the heap of gold was small, and there were no pictures or statues.

"What is Numidia noted for?" queried the shoemaker in a disappointed tone.

"Sand!" replied the Marian veteran roughly.

The prisoners, too, were not exciting in number or novelty; small fallow men, effeminately handsome in feature but at the moment sickly-looking with cold and fright, they bore themselves dejectedly in their chains, and their leaders had no great air of rank or spirit.

"Not much of a show," the Marian veteran summed it up contemptuously, spitting again.

The flute-players, who came next, looked a little uncomfortable, for the sacrificial bulls behind them seemed in an uneasy and restless mood; they bellowed and plunged, tossing the garlands round their necks, and the priests in attendance had hard work to keep them from charging the crowd with their gilded horns. The cause of their restlessness was soon apparent, for a long heavy roar announced the appearance of a string of African elephants in single file, their massive heads swaying, their huge feet making a shuffling noise over the paving-stones, their great eyes rolling dully over the crowd. As one of the great wrinkled beasts passed the fuller's group, it suddenly lifted its trunk, revealing a dirty pink mouth all a-slobber, and trumpeted shrilly. "Poor thing! It doesn't like the stones to its feet," said the shoemaker pityingly. It seemed almost as if the elephant understood the sympathetic comment and wished to hear more, for it halted

and refused to budge for all its driver's urgings, and stood there swinging one tree-like leg back and forth in a dancing movement, and swaying its trunk from side to side alarmingly. It was so close that the hairs on the end of its trunk and its enormous sparse eyelashes were clearly visible to the little group, who watched its rhythmic motion with some anxiety. Its driver now laid about it in earnest with his stick; with a shrill bellow the elephant lunged aside. The fuller and his neighbours recoiled in panic. But as there was no room for any movement in the crowded Forum just then, an angry shouting and jostling at once arose and began to spread, and in a moment a few of the hotter spirits were kicking and cuffing; it seemed as if a riot of some magnitude was at hand. Luckily at this moment the elephant, extending its trunk to its longest stretch, neatly picked a piece of cheese from the shoemaker's basket and with a graceful curve of its trunk fed it into its gaping pink mouth. The crowd, restored to good temper at once, ceased to struggle, roared with laughter and clapped their hands; the elephant nodded its head up and down slowly as if in acknowledgment, and stumped on.

"That's the sort of thing that's been delaying the procession, no doubt," observed the fuller wisely. "I'll bet that elephant's been taught that as a trick."

"Aye—that was a bit of good fun," admitted the veteran, laughing. "But the rest of the show's nothing."

"I think it was a very disobliging trick," piped the shoemaker, offended. "It was my cheese, after all."

But all his neighbours laughed him down heartily.

"Send in a bill to the public treasury!" cried one. "Get a tribune to bring in a cheese law!" jeered another. "Tribunes have no power nowadays," muttered the Marian veteran sullenly at this: "We've Sulla to thank for that." "Charge Pompey a bit extra next time you sell your vote to him," advised the fuller jeeringly.

But now a swelling shout announced the approach of the

young imperator, and here were his lictors walking in single file before him, their fasces, rods of office, laurel-wreathed. "Here he is! Here's the general! Io, Pompey!" shouted the crowd, as the triumphal chariot came into sight, drawn by four fine bay horses. Pompey, clad in the traditional flowered tunic and gold-embroidered purple toga of the triumphing general, the laurel wreath resting lightly on his thick curling hair, made a very agreeable picture of youth and comeliness; he stood sternly erect, his head held high, and tried to preserve the severe dignity proper to the occasion, but in spite of himself could not restrain a half-smile of sheer delight, which was very appealing in its boyish candour.


"He's very young," said the shoemaker kindly.

"Aye. He's done well for such a lad—make a real soldier of him some day," agreed the veteran in a gruff tone.

They both shouted: "Triumph! Cnaeus Pompey! Pompey!" with hearty good will.

The cheers rang louder and louder through the bright sunny air, the trumpeters, now half way up the Capitoline, blew a piercing blast; the horses' hoofs rattling on the stones, the thunderous tramp of his infantry marching behind him, their cheerful songs, mingled with these and beat in Pompey's ear intoxicatingly. Oh, this is the crown of life, thought Pompey, this is life's purpose, its true aim, thus publicly to receive the plaudits of all Rome. A pity about those elephants, he thought boyishly—Demetrius was right, they were too broad to go through the gate when yoked and he had been obliged to use horses—but just as well perhaps; better after all to keep to the old traditional ways. He was intensely conscious of every leaf in his fillet of laurel, every proud purple fold at his breast. Demetrius, who was to be set free that day in celebration, stood behind him in the triumphal car, gracefully holding a golden wreath aloft above his head. The horses, driven frantic by the noise, began to rear and caper; with strong easy movements, rapid but not at all flurried, Pompey reduced them to control. On this the

delighted people pressed round him in even wilder enthusiasm, shouting and clapping. Triumph ! Pompey ! Pompey ! Suddenly frightful screams tore the air, making themselves heard even above the madly exultant shouts of the crowd. Pompey blanched ; these were, he knew, the death-cries of the chiefs of his African captives, taken aside from the procession by public executioners, and slain. " I won't have them put to death next time," thought the soft-hearted Pompey, and felt consoled. The procession mounted the Capitol and entered the temple of Jupiter ; Pompey, murmuring the proper formula to himself lest he should forget it, awaited the culminating moment when he should offer his laurels to the god. Cheers thundered ever more tumultuously outside the temple in his honour ; all Rome rang with his name. O father Jupiter, grant me to triumph again often, prayed Pompey ; for this public honour is felicity's height ; this it is to be a Roman, this is true fame.



PROVINCE

"SO YOU DIDN'T feel safe at Rome, hey?" said the praetor.

"My friends have obtained my pardon from Sulla, but I thought I had better prove my usefulness to the Republic in some campaign against her enemies before returning to Rome," explained Caesar. His manner was calm and courteous, as always, but a little tired, for he had only just disembarked from a considerable voyage, and still felt somewhat seasick and decidedly empty; moreover, he had made this explanation several times before. "Your campaign here in Asia seemed to afford most opportunities of acquiring military skill," he continued suavely, "and I hoped, too, that, if you would permit me to attach myself to your staff, I should gain an insight into the administration of a province, by watching you at work."

"Well—we've pretty well finished up the job over here on the mainland," said the praetor doubtfully, "as far as anything in Asia is ever finished, that is. As fast as you subdue one lot out here, they begin again in another place. In my opinion we haven't done with Mithridates yet. But at the moment things look tidy. There's only Lesbos—the island, you know—still holding out. And I must have some more ships before I can tackle that. As for the province, there's not much on hand at the moment; the usual courts of justice, that's all. You can attend those if you like. But I still don't quite see what you're doing out here. You don't look at all the fighting type, to me. Not but what your letters of recommendation are very warm," he added hastily, turning over

the papers on the table with his thick fingers. "Very warm indeed, and from people of the highest rank. But I get a hundred just as good, every month. If it's a question of putting pressure on some city out here for the interest on money you've lent them, I'll do what I can, of course. But if you're looking for an appointment of some kind, well, I don't grant them for anything but service."

"Naturally," agreed Caesar.

The praetor, Marcus Minucius Thermus by name, a large, high-coloured man whose bulging cheeks almost concealed his eyes, cleared his throat thunderously, and continued to turn over the letters which Caesar had brought from his friends, wearing a portentous frown. The young man was a little taken aback by the manner of his reception, and not quite sure whether a demeanour of patrician haughtiness, or of subdued respect for an officer in high command, would serve him best. He decided that silence would suit either of these attitudes, so said nothing, and let his eyes wander admiringly over the rich tapestries with which the strange Asiatic room was hung, and the lamp of fine design which stood at the praetor's elbow. The silence continued, and suddenly Caesar felt himself blushing to his ears. "What a fool I am!" he thought, and remarked aloud gravely: "Of course I should expect to make a proper contribution towards the expenses of my stay here; I could not consent to be a burden upon your administration."

"Oh, well, in that case," said the praetor, visibly brightening, "no doubt we can be of mutual assistance."

"That is my earnest hope, Marcus Thermus," responded Caesar, keeping his eyes down.

"Look here," said Thermus suddenly in a confidential tone, pushing the papers away and leaning across the table towards Caesar: "You're what they call a man of artistic taste, aren't you? Well up in Greek, and all that? Yes, I can see you are. Well, come along and give me your advice on a few things I've got together down here." Without

waiting for Caesar to reply, he got up, shouting in a brisk army tone for his attendants, who came in promptly. In response to his orders torches were brought, and a slave led the way along tortuous passages and down dark steps. "Funny way of building houses they have out here," said Thermus, limping ahead. "Funny lot altogether. Don't think much of them myself." He paused to take Caesar's arm, and leaned his considerable weight upon it, heavily. "Excuse me," he said. "Old wound, you know. They keep the passages so damned slippery—dirt. No idea what cleanliness means. Nice of this old chap to give me hospitality, of course." He winked at Caesar, who smiled rather vaguely in reply, not taking the allusion. "Here we are. What do you think of this lot, hey?"

Caesar could not repress an exclamation of astonishment. The flickering of the torches was reflected on all sides from the surfaces of metals and precious stones. Coins, candelabra, harness, goblets, ornaments of every kind lay there in gleaming heaps, and a couple of large bronze gates were leaning against one wall; but what particularly attracted Caesar's attention was an extraordinary collection of carved figures—figures in wood, in stone, in marble, in silver and gold—gathered together in one corner. They were of all sizes and in all styles, ranging from a delicious little statuette of Diana, in chased silver, scarcely a palm's length high, and executed with the most consummate art, to a primitive old fellow with his stone arms stuck stiffly to his sides and his toes undivided, too tall to stand up in that underground room, and therefore lying diagonally, with his head in a corner of the roof and his pedestal in the middle of the floor. Most of the figures had precious stones in them somewhere, either as eyes, or in rings, or jewelling the folds of their elaborately carved clothes.

"But what?" cried Caesar, beginning to laugh. The spectacle of the massed arms and legs, the heroic noses pointing at odd angles, overcame his gravity, and he gave vent to a ringing peal, utterly unable to restrain his mirth.

To his relief Thermus joined in with a hoarse guffaw. "Funny collection, aren't they?" he said. "Gods, you know. From the temples hereabouts. Once or twice when a city couldn't pay the interest on its taxes, I've taken a god as security for the debt. A few I've bought—at my own price, naturally. And some I've taken to teach them a lesson."

"But is there a single god left to all Asia?" cried Caesar between his peals. "You can't have left them one to worship!"

Thermus seemed a little put out. "Well, they'd too many, anyhow," he said seriously. "What do they want with such a lot of deities, after all? But listen: which do you think will fetch the best price, in Rome?"

Caesar, still gasping and choking, wiped his eyes and picked up the Diana statuette. "This is almost priceless, I imagine," he said.

"That little one?" said Thermus, fixing his small eyes avidly on Caesar. "You think so? Really? Why?"

"The workmanship is exquisite," said Caesar.

"Really?" said Thermus again, looking at the statuette curiously, as Caesar turned it about in his slender hands. "That's very interesting. I've no experience in that kind of thing myself, you know. You might pick out a few other things that strike you particularly, will you?"

"With pleasure," replied Caesar, biting his lips to retain his gravity.

Interesting himself at once in the subject presented by the moment, he began to stoop about amid the treasures—with a cool sobriety, however, which prevented any loss of dignity—taking up here and there some piece which attracted him, and explaining to Thermus, who listened attentively, how such a goblet must have been made in Rhodes by reason of its workmanship, and such another in Alexandria because of its design. Thermus found his explanations clear and well-expressed, not clouded by that exaggerated passion for art

which always irritated him so much in Greeks. He began to speak in a more intimate tone, to which the young man gladly responded. Caesar's face, which had been pale with fatigue, now glowed with animation; Thermus subjected him to a shrewd scrutiny, and observed his slender well-shaped body, his lively friendly look, his charming luminous eyes.

"He may make a mess of it," mused the praetor, "but then I can't spare anyone else trustworthy to send—and those I can spare I can't trust. Keep him out of the way, too. He's very suitable. I'll risk it. Listen, my boy," he said aloud in a paternal tone, clapping his hand on Caesar's shoulder, "you're a clever lad and a good talker, that's plain, and you understand all this artistic nonsense, don't you. Now, can I trust you to go on a mission for me?"

"I should be delighted, honoured!" cried Caesar eagerly, standing erect.

"Do you know where Bithynia is?" demanded Thermus.

"Surely," replied Caesar, laughing.

"It's more than most of them do at home in the Senate," said the praetor gloomily. "However! I want you to choose out one or two really good things from this lot here, and take them as a present from me to King Nicomedes of Bithynia, and get him to send off those ships he promised me. I can't do anything effective against Lesbos till I have those ships."

"I'll bring the ships," promised Caesar, his eyes aglow.

"It's a little awkward, you see," continued Thermus. "Several of the seacoast cities round here are obliged to provide the governor of the province with a ship properly fitted out, as part of their yearly tribute; but not thinking I should need them, I let them off."

"For a consideration, I suppose," said Caesar in a man-of-the-world tone.

"Now look here, young man!" shouted Thermus abruptly, thrusting his face very close to Caesar's: "If you've come out here to look for material for a prosecution against me, say so at once, and I shall know what to do with you"

"I assure you I haven't," said Caesar uncomfortably. The praetor's cheerful red face had changed to a mask of fury, and his little eyes gleamed maliciously.

"It's very silly for a young man to set himself up in judgment of his elders and betters," pursued the praetor, withdrawing a little but still preserving a menacing air.

"Very," agreed Caesar, hoping the irony of his tone would pass unnoticed.

"I do nothing but what is customary and traditional," continued Thermus in an aggrieved tone, nevertheless watching Caesar closely. "The allowance the Senate decrees isn't half enough to carry on the government of this province as it should be carried on, and one has to eke it out somehow. I've got a family to provide for, too, at home. What use are works of art to these Asiatics, anyway? What do they need money for? Squalling undisciplined barbarians that they are—can't keep their line five minutes when our fellows really get at them with the sword. Good thing they have us to carry on the government for them, that's what I always say."

"Just so," agreed Caesar, looking away.

The praetor gave him a long shrewd glance.

"Well, see what you can do about those ships," he said. "I'm not joking—I never joke about fighting—I really need them."

"I'll bring them," said Caesar quietly.

"Nicomedes is an awkward man to deal with," pursued the praetor. "So mind what you're about. Choose one or two really good things as presents, and let me see what they are. Ask me for copies of the letters that have passed between us, before you go."

"With your permission, I will start at once," said Caesar.

"Yes, do," agreed Thermus comfortably, pulling at a piece of rich purple fabric which was entangled in a jewelled lamp.

"So if I might have the letters now?" hesitated Caesar.

"Hercules!" said Thermus, staring. "You aren't going off to-night?" Caesar nodded. "What, without any dinner?" said the praetor in astonishment. Reading in the young man's face that such was his intention, his own face clouded. "You're in a hurry," he said suspiciously.

"But if you can't attack Lesbos till I return?" urged Caesar.

The praetor stared at him in silence for a long moment. "Very well, be off with you," he said then. "Ask my secretary to give you the letters." He seemed about to say something else, then changed his mind, and substituted: "May your journey be fortunate," in a formal dismissing tone.

The banquet had already lasted several hours, and seemed likely to continue for as many more. The queer sticky foods were still being handed on the golden dishes, the sweet heady wine still flowed in torrents from the golden jars; the fearful wail of eastern music still echoed in the fantastic pointed arches, glittering with mosaic, of Nicomedes' great hall; the king's dancers still whirled their silken limbs beneath their rosy veils in erotic frenzy. Cymbals clashed, bracelets and anklets jingled, naked feet shuffled endlessly over the tiled floor, everyone was talking; the stale air, thick with a pungent incense and hot with the fumes from innumerable silver lamps, puffed against one's cheek in sickly waves, constantly circulated but not cooled by the iridescent fans of peacock feathers waved above Nicomedes' head by jet-black Nubian slaves. From time to time the king himself, a huge gross creature with sagging yellow jowl and greasy curls beneath his jewelled coronet, wrapped in magnificent pearl-encrusted robes of blue and gold which were rather dirty, belched so violently that the whole couch shook. Altogether the scene had an Asiatic excess and confusion which were extremely repugnant to a Roman mind; Caesar's head ached,

his eyes smarted, he felt desperately fatigued and bored. He could enjoy an orgy once in a while as well as anyone, he reflected, but three orgies in succession were too much of a good thing; it was all he could do to suppress his yawns. Amid the rolling eyes, the saffron skins, the wild words and vehement gestures of his present barbaric companions he felt very clean and white and Roman—yes, more and more Roman; he felt an affection for Rome just now which he would have laughed at in Rome; even that rascal Thermus with his pile of gods would have been a welcome sight at the moment, because he spoke in Latin and bore a Roman name. But Rome, alas, was far away; far, far away; so far that he almost felt as if he would never see it again.

For he was far from the accomplishment of his errand, too. He had stated it, on his arrival three days ago, in a clear tone of command which seemed to make an impression on Nicomedes, and he continued to press home to the king at every opportunity his debt to the Romans, who had driven out the invading Mithridates from Bithynia, and the necessity for not leaving Mithridates one single ally unsubdued, who might stir him again into war. Nicomedes listened attentively whenever the subject was mentioned, and once or twice remarked in his thick bad Greek: "You know our affairs here well." "Not as well as you know the deeds of the Romans," Caesar replied smoothly with a smile. The remark held a sting, and Nicomedes acknowledged this by nodding slowly, and giving the young envoy a shrewd sideways glance from his liquid yellow eyes. But although the king had uttered floods of complimentary rhetoric to the young Roman, he had given no definite answer to Caesar's request, and certainly no ships had as yet been placed at his disposal to take to the aid of the province. Caesar had heard of the traditional delays of the East, and had not expected to make rapid headway; but he was disturbed to-night by a feeling of tension about him, he was uneasily conscious that something unusual, though he knew not what, was in the air.

Nicomedes, having placed the young man at his right hand in the place of honour, fixed on him a hot heavy stare, hardly taking his yellow eyes from his guest throughout the banquet, while from time to time his fleshy nose twitched oddly, as if he were feeling some powerful emotion, which he was barely able to restrain. The other guests—in brilliant fabrics, glittering with gold and emeralds—also stared at Caesar smiling, as though he in some way amused them, and whispered about him to their neighbours in their sibilant tongue. As the banquet progressed their stares grew more obvious and their incomprehensible remarks louder, while the king began to lay his fat yellow hand caressingly on Caesar's fingers—which looked whiter than ever by contrast—with increasing frequency. He did this now, offering his young guest his own regal platter, from which it was a mark of honour to be permitted to take a piece of food. Caesar, repressing his disgust at the uncleanly custom, bowed his head courteously, smiled, and selected a small titbit with the air of choosing at random; the eyes of everyone in the hall—noble, slave, dancing-girl—were fixed on him, he felt, as he did so, and even the very Nubians gave him a flash of their white teeth. The chatter broke out louder than ever as the king dashed the plate roughly to the ground.

"Is it possibly poisoned?" wondered Caesar, looking Nicomedes full in the eyes with a friendly air, as he calmly put the morsel in his mouth. "Is it perhaps his intention to kill me?" He bent his mind to study coolly how such an act could advantage the Bithynian king. "He may mean to change sides and become Mithridates' ally, and offer him my murder as a token of revolt against the Romans," he pondered. "But surely I'm hardly important enough to be much use as such a pledge? I'm an envoy, certainly, but I can't think Thermus values me very high. I'm not important enough to be worth murdering by anyone, at the moment," he decided, "but unfortunately Nicomedes may not know that till it's too late."

He had come to the table unarmed, and he did not regret it, for no weapon could save one man from a hundred, except his wits; for a similar reason, though he looked about now and caught the eyes of one or two of his personal attendants fixed on him apprehensively, he did not summon them—they were too few; it was foolish uselessly to waste lives. Caesar kept cool and still and quiet and smiled slightly, looking down his nose with a supercilious air, as became a Roman in the presence of an inferior race; but he was alert in every nerve, his mind tingled with the consciousness of danger. "A reference to the victories of Sulla in these regions might perhaps serve as a useful deterrent to my murder," he thought: "but on the other hand, Nicomedes may have had word from Rome that my death would be acceptable to Sulla. You flatter yourself, my dear," he told himself reprovingly, "you're not worth a finger-nail to Sulla, dead or alive. The situation," he summed up with amusement, "is definitely awkward. It's like trying to cheat in tossing for heads-or-ships, when you don't know which your opponent has called."

The cymbals clashed into a deafening climax, the dancing girls after a last mad whirl flung themselves panting to the ground in shameless attitudes, and the king, heaving and swaying and hiccoughing, staggered to his feet.

"It's come," thought Caesar. He rose, and stood there with quiet courage, awaiting a dagger in back or ribs.

No one stabbed him, however; instead, the king staggered away to a curtained archway at the side of the hall, where two of his household guards stood at attention, holding scimitars. Turning, clinging to the heavy tapestry for support, he beckoned drunkenly to Caesar. There was a sudden complete silence and cessation of movement in the hall—even the Nubians ceased to sway the long peacock fans—and a hundred eyes were fixed on Caesar. "Well!" thought the young man, perplexed by their looks, which though sneering, seemed too calm to be murderous: "This

too I must try, I suppose." He walked slowly, head in air, with Roman dignity, across the wine-stained pavement, to where Nicomedes awaited him with dilated eyes. The king, his jewelled ornaments jingling, seized him by the arm and drew him through the archway, and the massive curtain fell behind them. Caesar looked round him at a room empty save for rich hangings and cushions; no executioner stood there, no gleaming Nubian with an axe, and the guards with their glittering scimitars had not followed them. He turned back to the king, really puzzled, and suddenly found Nicomedes close to him, whispering eagerly, his thick lips pressed against the Roman's ear, his fat yellow arm resting caressingly round the young man's neck.

"But what is this?" cried Caesar, freeing himself angrily. "I am not a woman!"

Nicomedes laughed, showing his discoloured and broken teeth, and said something rapidly in the barbaric tongue. Seeing that Caesar did not understand, he waved his arms about as if in quest of missing words, and then translated.

"Ah!" cried Caesar.

He stepped back, revolted. He had heard his elders at home discuss, with grave abhorrence, the unnatural vices of the Orient, and was by no means unaware of their regrettable spread westwards to Rome. But that he, the proud and fastidious Caius Caesar, Aurelia's son, should be thought a fit subject for such a proposal, had certainly never entered his head, and a cold anger filled him at Nicomedes' words. In the king's barbaric Greek the suggestion sounded particularly crude, and from the king's barbaric person particularly disgusting. Caesar drew himself up proudly and tried to beat down the hot gaze of the king's topaz eyes. But this was a situation he could not dominate; the two guards with their sharp curving scimitars, the alien company in the hall, his insignificant and scattered suite, the despotic power of an eastern king, and, above all, the thousand miles separating the scene from Rome: these

could not be compelled into a shape agreeable to him. The alternatives were simple: yield or die. He did not object to die when necessary, reflected Caesar; but to lose his life over an insignificant affair like this, the first piece of public business with which he had been entrusted! It was too stupid. Besides, even if by some miracle he escaped the fatal consequences of a refusal, his mission would of necessity be a failure. Was he to run back to Thermus beaten, without the ships, whining about his assaulted virtue, like a girl? "This is what Thermus intended," he guessed in a flash, and for a moment longed to feel his hands squeezing the life from the praetor's throat. But what was the use of that? To give way to useless resentment was simply childish. His present business was to decide what to do, promptly.

There was a pause. Then Caesar shrugged his shoulders. "What does it matter after all?" he thought. "If the game is so, so I will play it."

He relaxed his mask of rage into one of his most charming and agreeable smiles, and Nicomedes, whose face had been growing sombre, smiled responsively.

"But you will let me have the ships?" murmured Caesar with an arch glance at the king.

"Have the ships," agreed Nicomedes, nodding as he repeated the Latin words.

"When?" demanded Caesar.

"Soon, soon!" babbled Nicomedes, pawing him happily.

A month later six good Bithynian ships, well fitted and fully manned, sailed down the Propontis under Caesar's orders.

Thermus was delighted with his young friend's success; his little eyes almost popped out of his head when he saw the fine vessels riding at anchor in the bay, he clapped Caesar

heartily on the shoulder and cried: "Now we can do something about Lesbos!" "How did you manage it, eh?" he added with interest; but without waiting for an answer fell into a tremendous bustle of activity, issuing orders right and left. During the next few weeks, while preparations were being completed for the attack on Mytilene, the chief city of the obdurate island, the praetor kept Caesar constantly with him, and several times reverted casually to his success with Nicomedes, asking in a tone of curiosity, or with a pleased chuckle, how he had brought it off. Caesar made him no confidences on the subject. But on the day before the final attack, while he was at dinner with Thermus, it suddenly struck him that his reserve was quite unnecessary; something in the praetor's leer, his man-of-the-world tone, the increasing salacity of his after-dinner stories, warned the young man that the discretion of his attendants, which he thought he had bought with good Roman gold, had not been proof against the desire to tell an amusing story, and the whole camp was in possession of the Bithynian affair. Desiring to be certain, Caesar, looking the praetor steadily in the eye, made an allusion to the hospitality of Nicomedes; the praetor's coarse answering jest left him in no further doubt. It was not an agreeable discovery, and Caesar's cheek burned. Thermus seemed inclined to rally him on the matter cheerfully, but as Caesar, feeling there was nothing to be said, said nothing, making neither excuses nor protestations, the topic perished from sheer lack of material.

Thermus drew up his dispositions for the storm of Mytilene with a certain rough cunning, which Caesar observed keenly. The main assault was to be directed against the causeway joining the heap of rock on which the city was built to the island; but strong diversions were to be created by attacking parties from various points on the sea side, and to one of these Caesar was allotted.

He could not control a shiver of excitement as the skiff holding his party edged in to the tall white rocks; this was

the first real service he had seen, this was a day of real importance in his life; he awaited its event composed but tense.

It was early morning and the wind blew cold, though the sun shone and the sky and the bobbing waves were blue. The landing was awkward; the white rocks—yellowish on a closer view—were smooth like marble and very slippery; the boat was barely hidden from the city walls by a small jutting cape, and if the oars relaxed their attention for a moment it slipped into sight and called down a hail of spears. Caesar skipped out nimbly, crossed the slippery rock and came to a slope of turf starred with small blue flowers. "An agreeable place," he thought, halting with the rest and adjusting his shield. A centurion shouted orders to which Caesar listened attentively, and they all set off up the slope, which proved steeper than it had appeared. They topped the rise, saw a steeper rise and the white walls of the city above them, and suddenly found themselves in a swirl of noise and confusion; a flock of seabirds rose on their right screaming and flapping their great wings, spears came thudding down into the turf beside them, far above on the walls men in bright colours yelled defiance and shook their pikes menacingly, and round a fold of hill came running a score of white-kilted Greeks. They looked fierce, used to fighting, sunburnt and determined; "a hardy seafaring race," thought Caesar, taking careful aim with his spear. He hit the fellow, who recoiled; pleased, Caesar ran swiftly towards him. Another Roman ran at his side, a solid elderly man with grey hair, scarred and bronzed and weatherbeaten, whom Caesar had noticed in the skiff, giving advice to the recruits with an experienced air; his northern accent was so outlandish that Caesar barely understood his Latin, but he fought like a soldier, which was what was necessary. For they were fighting now, side by side; it seemed they had long left the little landing bay behind, fought up and down the slippery green slopes, and come at last to a level space between the

towering cliffs; the Greeks were thick about them like bees, buzzing and stinging. Suddenly the north-countryman gave a hoarse scream and fell to his knees; one of the enemy had cut the sinews of his thighs, from the rear. They all closed in upon him, and through the confused medley of arms and blades Caesar caught a glimpse of his honeststupid face, now a sickly yellow with fear, the mouth contorted into a gaping circle. His eyes were fixed avidly on Caesar, terrified, pleading.

"Ah!" cried the young man, and bounded forward.

The force of his charge carried him through to the fallen man's side; he stood above him, protecting his exposed flank with his shield, laying about him vigorously with his sword, and dragging the wounded man backwards towards the face of rock, a little at a time as he had opportunity. The Greeks pressed them closely, and showed no signs of retreating; it was all a hot muddle of gasping and stamping and the jarring clash of bronze on bronze and the sudden smart of wounds, and seemed to continue interminably. "But this is absurd!" thought Caesar, irritated. "These fellows can't stand against Romans like this. If you imagine," he mentally addressed the Greeks, timing his words with his thrusts and stabs, "if you imagine you're going to kill this poor fellow and myself, I assure you that you're wrong." The Greeks continued to attack, annoyed by the jabs which the wounded Roman gave them with his pike. "O, go away!" thought Caesar, exasperated. "Really this becomes wearisome." At this moment one of the enemy passed his guard and slashed his arm. Caesar gave an infuriated shout and sprang at him fiercely.

The next moment there were no Greeks there at all; nothing but the trampled sweet-smelling turf, the hot sun, the blue sea breaking into glittering surf against the rocks below.

"Well!" thought Caesar, gazing about him in astonishment. "So this is how one storms a town. That was a sortie, I suppose."

A seabird, drifting by on its great wings, looked at the young man coldly, opened its beak to give a contemptuous screech, and vanished round the cliffs. Caesar laughed, and shook himself; the sweat was pouring down his neck and shoulders, but the blood on his arm seemed to be congealing nicely. He felt his tunic pulled; looking down, he saw the northerner gazing up at him, tears on his solid face. "Saved my life," muttered the fellow in a piteous tone. Just then a trumpet sounded close at hand, and a score of Romans came round the corner in a rush.

"Where are you going?" shouted Caesar, running beside them.

"To the causeway! We've made a landing! Can't you hear the noise?" they cried—and indeed a considerable clangour and shouting was now making itself heard towards the west.

"Nonsense! We were ordered to make a diversion on this side," panted Caesar. "There's a path leading upwards here—we'll take it—follow me."

He scrambled up the slope full tilt, and the men obediently followed him. The city walls, when they came into view, seemed bare of defenders but very high.

"There'll be a gatesomewhere near," said Caesar, remembering the sortie but looking about doubtfully.

"Aye, but that'll be guarded," said one of the men. "We'd best get over here."

He pointed to a huge buttress; in a moment they were all swarming over and leaping down on the other side of the wall. A few citizens—not fighting men—were huddled together below, wailing and arguing; a woman screamed and pointed, seeing Caesar, and at once they were all off, running headlong down the street. Caesar's little band followed at a good pace, and drove all they met steadily before them; here and there they encountered some resistance, when a few Greeks, running from Thermus' advance on the land side, fought desperately to cut their way through to escape;

but it was no use; the Romans had come into the town from every direction at once; the people of Mytilene were hemmed in on every side. Caesar's group gradually fell in with others, and swelled to a century, and presently became part of an orderly advance under proper officers and behind a standard, towards the centre of the town. They reached the market-place and saw Thermus standing on the plinth of a statue in his purple general's cloak, issuing orders; his red face was hotter than ever with the flush of victory, his little eyes sparkled with satisfaction.

The word was passed round to sack the town, and the soldiers fell to with a will; soon the air was full of smoke, the smell of blood and screams of varying note and intensity, while the streets were hardly passable for the press of Roman legionaries dragging women by the wrist or balancing valuables on their heads as they strode along. In the market-place were gathered such remnants of the soldiers of Mytilene as survived; Thermus had decided that these were all to be sold into slavery for their wrong-headed continuance of strife after Mithridates and the Romans had concluded peace, and already the contractors were about them, pinching their arms and noting down their accomplishments. Caesar bought a secretary—a little fellow, Philemon by name—because something in the lines of the man's brow and chin seemed to promise a quick intelligence, and he could never resist the temptation to buy that, however high the price. But this fellow was offered cheap, it proved, because his foot was all but severed, hanging by the tendons.

By the time this transaction was completed the scene no longer held any novelty for Caesar, and he felt wearied by all this turbulence and mess. As he was not permanently attached to any particular legion he looked about till he found the lictors which denoted the presence of the praetor, and went into the building thus honoured to ask if there were any task he might usefully do. Thermus was sitting in the court of a fine temple; Caesar observed with amusement

that a few marble gods already lay tumbled on the pavement before him, and he was gazing at them appraisingly in the intervals of receiving reports and giving orders. Caesar stepped forward and began to make his request.

"You did that very well," interrupted Thermus with approval.

Caesar looked his question.

"Yes, you shall have an oak crown for that," continued the praetor affably.

It appeared that the incident of the hamstrung legionary had occurred in full view of the ship which was conveying Thermus round the island to the causeway, and the commander considered that Caesar had earned the decoration awarded for the saving in battle of a citizen's life.

Caesar was pleased, but a little surprised, to find valour so easy. "It's to be hoped the fellow reached safety after I left him," he thought, not without shame, and he took pains to have the wounded northerner found, to give him money and send him his own physician.

The civic crown was presented, and Thermus' complimentary oration delivered, before the whole army, drawn up in parade order, in camp on Lesbos a few weeks later. Caesar was naturally gratified; but he began to feel impatient as Thermus went on barking out muddled sentences about his valour and his fortune—very ungrammatical sentences, short of verbs—unendingly from the grass tribune above his head. It was all very agreeable, but a little simple, he thought, for when all was said and done this was but a small campaign; it was no great matter, from the State's point of view, to have subdued one Aegean city; it would count for very little in Rome. "These generals!" reflected Caesar with a smile; and as the oak-leaves were being fitted about his brow he decided that he had already learned all that Thermus had to teach.

When, therefore, letters came presently from Rome announcing that Sulla was dead and the Popular party

raising its head again, Caesar gladly decided to set sail homewards. Thermus gave a banquet for him the night before he left, and all the officers drank the young man's health.

"Whatever in future befalls me, and wherever fortune leads my steps," replied Caesar to this honour in his clear high tones: "I shall never forget my first experience of the Republic's service, here in this province."

This friendly sentiment was highly applauded, and Thermus actually shed tears over the young man, at parting, and told him he loved him like a son.

FACTION

“A SMALL GROUP—in point of fact, some of us who find the present constitution unworkable—will meet at the Elephant to-night an hour after sunset,” said Caesar’s brother-in-law, Cinna, and accordingly Caesar was sitting in the back room of the Elephant now.

The Elephant was a low-class tavern in a disreputable quarter of Rome, and the room was so small that his knees were pressed tightly against the knees of Cinna, Brutus and the other five leaders of the Popular party present; the walls were dirty and not free from lice, and scribbled all over with drawings of coarse jokes; the air was heavy with the mingled odours of sour wine and frying garlic; the drinkers in the front room were growing quarrelsome, so that shouts interrupted often what Brutus was saying, brought a pained frown to his gloomy brow and caused him to move impatiently, to the great discomfort of Caesar, for Brutus was thin and bony. All the men wore plebeian dress to disguise their rank, and Caesar had perhaps gone rather far in this respect, wearing a somewhat heavy woollen cloak. They all made a show, too, of ordering and drinking great quantities of wine, to keep up the pretence that they were a jovial family party, and the Elephant’s wine was quite simply atrocious.

But in spite of all these discomforts Caesar was happy. It was good to be in Rome again, good to be busy with public affairs. This little inn might well be the starting point of a revolution in the administration of the Republic, he thought; this meeting to-night might be one of the most important in the history of Rome. He was proud to be here, proud to be

associated with these bold experienced men, determined to save their country from the misrule of the Senate, to overthrow the cramping constitution so firmly established by Sulla and establish one of more "popular" kind. Some of the anti-Sullan Popular party had congregated in Spain and were fighting strongly against the official armies, and their success recently had been so marked that supporting action seemed possible in Rome. Brutus, who had a long fallow melancholy face and an occasional stutter, was explaining all this now.

"And what action shall we take?" asked Caesar eagerly.

Brutus hesitated, then replied that one of the present consuls, Lepidus by name and Popular by conviction, whose rank entitled him to be regarded as the head of the party, proposed to make a statement of policy to-morrow night after dinner, in Brutus' house. Caesar was delighted. The adherence of an actual consul, one of the holders of the supreme yearly magistracy of Rome, to this "small group of those who find the present constitution unworkable" seemed indeed to set the seal on the group's importance, and the words "statement of policy" had a lofty ring. This was no affair of Thermus and an insignificant island! He expressed his pleasure in a quick eager word. Brutus, looking at him gloomily, suggested that perhaps he was not familiar with the events of Lepidus' year of office. The other consul for the year, Lepidus' colleague, was a convinced Sullan, a firm supporter of the Senate, and the two had quarrelled throughout the year. They had quarrelled over Sulla's funeral, and the difference was only composed by the intervention of Pompey; they had quarrelled over the Senate's treatment of the children of the proscribed; they had quarrelled indeed so persistently that the Senate grew apprehensive of actual violence between the two heads of the State, and compelled them to swear an oath not to take up arms against each other.

"Surely there is no question of that?" said Caesar, surprised.

The heavy eyebrows of Brutus twitched; after a moment he repeated gloomily: "Our c-c-c-consul will make a statement of p-p-policy to-morrow night."

"The question now is: whom to invite?" broke in Cinna briskly.

Names were thrown out rapidly, by all present except Caesar, whose absence in Asia had made him unfamiliar with the current political alignment. He was surprised to find how many men were mentioned as suitable, as inclining to the Popular view, whom he had known as Sullans. Regretting his inability to contribute to the list, he tried to help by drawing out his tablets and making a list of those proposed, and the usefulness of this list was soon admitted. He was also surprised to find debt regarded as a qualification for joining the group. A name would be proposed; yes, he's deeply in debt, said one or the other, and the name went down at once.

"What about your wife's half-brother, young Cato?" suggested Cinna to Brutus.

The stilus jumped in Caesar's hand at this reference to Servilia, whom he had not seen since his return to Rome.

"O, no!" said Brutus, smiling for once. "Not Cato. *He* is not on our side."

"But he hated Sulla?" objected one of the group.

"I am afraid C-C-C-Cato hates everything which is not as it was in the days of his g-g-g-great-g-g-grandfather," said Brutus with his melancholy smile. "He hates Dictators, as he hates Populares like ourselves, because they disturb the old constitution of the Rep-p-public. Don't put *him* down."

The names were presently divided among the group, each man being allotted a number to approach. This done, they left the inn one by one, with their cloaks held up so as to conceal their faces. This seemed to cause the ordinary

guests in the outer room a good deal of amusement, for guffaws, increasing in loudness with each fresh exit, were heard, together with lively (and often correct) speculations as to the departing guest's identity.

Next morning Caesar awoke feeling happy. At last he had something serious to do. He hurried about indefatigably all day from one to another of the lively young rakes on his list, and soon developed a regular routine for approaching them. After a preliminary joke and some scandal, he always began: "What do you think of the news from Spain?" If the reply indicated Popular sympathies, he went on with a casual air: "Has Brutus invited you to dine?" If the reply to this indicated a distaste for Brutus, he promptly implied that the dinner of Brutus was to occur ten days hence and led away from the whole subject; but if interest was shown, he played round the names of Brutus and Lepidus, reminded his hearers of his own well-known dislike of Sulla, and presently found himself murmuring in a low tone: "A small group . . . those who find the present constitution unworkable . . . dining with Brutus to-night . . . men only . . . plebeian dress." Finally, if an eager light appeared in the young men's eyes at this—and it usually did—Caesar gave them the password. "The word for admission," he murmured: "is: *Rome within Rome.*"

All this kept him so busy that he had barely time to hurry into a plebeian cloak and tunic and present himself at the house of Brutus at the hour named. At dinner no public business was mentioned, which was doubtless, thought Caesar, a wise precaution in the presence of the slaves; but he found the meal very tedious, longing as he was for the progress of the affair on hand. He glanced constantly, with eagerness, at Lepidus, who occupied the post of honour at his host's table; he was disappointed to find the consul a small frail man with a pale complexion, wild eyes, and a cough, but he reserved judgment on him till he should hear Lepidus speak.

At last the meal was over and the tables removed; the slaves retired and closed the doors, Brutus stuttered out a few introductory words, and the consul rose.

"Fellow-citizens!" he shouted oratorically.

Words flowed from his lips like a torrent in spring, and disappointment similarly flooded Caesar's heart. Alas! It was an affair of Thermus after all; it was Thermus all over again, in city dress. The man had neither a programme of action nor a clear aim; simply a few confused catchwords: *the arrogance of the Senate, the need for action, the triumph of the Popular party*. He proposed violence, too; actually spoke of raising an army in Etruria and marching on Rome! At this Caesar's eyebrows lifted disdainfully. Every so often he repeated the words: *thus we shall secure the triumph of the Popular party*, and then started all over again. In an oratorical pause which followed one of these "triumphs," Caesar suddenly stood up, rather amused by his own temerity but too provoked to hold his tongue, and in a cold hard tone enquired clearly:

"And what do you propose to do then?"

Everyone turned and stared at him reprovingly.

Lepidus, annoyed, threw him an angry glance and went on talking in his swift excitable tones. He was now explaining that the oath not to resort to violence extorted from him by the Senate only bound him for his year of office; as soon as that was over he would take the field. A bout of coughing here overtook him.

"With what forces?" demanded Caesar promptly.

Lepidus scowled at the importunate young man speaking from an unimportant place across the room, but this time condescended to reply to his question. There was trouble in the north, he said; some peasants who had been dispossessed by the allotment of their land to military veterans in Etruria had attacked these veterans and turned them out, and naturally the veterans would not take this quietly; a storm was brewing, and forces would be voted to the consuls

to disperse its elements; Lepidus would then turn those forces against Rome.

At this all but Caesar nodded in solemn agreement; veterans were a perennial but necessary evil, like showers in spring.

"That would be before the termination of your year of office, however," observed Caesar.

If, however, that plan should prove inconvenient, continued Lepidus angrily, when he set out for his proconsular province at the end of his consular year, he would turn the forces allotted to him against Rome. The discussion, which circled about itself persistently, had now reached the same crucial point as before. The light-hearted way in which Lepidus spoke of "turning forces against Rome," without any consideration either of the probabilities of success or the damage to the City which would necessarily ensue, exasperated Caesar beyond bearing.

"And what then?" he enquired in a disagreeably insistent tone.

Lepidus outlined his programme in glowing terms; a second consulship for himself, in the course of which he proposed to restore the civil rights of the children of the men proscribed by Sulla, to abolish debts——

At this there was a crackling of applause.

"That would be convenient for many of us, doubtless," said Caesar, now in a cold rage. "But why wait for a second consulship to introduce these measures? Why not begin them now?"

Everyone looked at him with vexation; it was so obvious that such revolutionary measures could not now be passed that his question seemed mere stupidity. Cinna, annoyed with his young brother-in-law for making such a fool of himself, pompously expressed the general feeling, and Brutus confirmed it.

"It is imp-p-p-possible to p-p-pass them now," he said.

"Then how can they be passed then?" objected Caesar.

"Forgive me, fellow-citizens; you do not take my meaning. A government can be overawed, and its form changed, only by an overwhelming military force or an overwhelming political combination." He was pleased with the way he had put this, and repeated it thoughtfully. "Anything short of one of those two is the merest faction," he went on, "and I see no reason to suppose you will command either. Spain is a long way off. And what part will Cnaeus Pompey play?"

"Young Cnaeus Pompey," cried Lepidus in a shrill impatient tone, "supported me in my candidature for the consulship."

"But he supported your colleague over Sulla's funeral," objected Caesar.

"And what are we to de-de-de-deduce from that?" sneered Brutus in his gloomy stutter, speaking for his leader, who was again overcome by a fit of coughing.

"It is difficult to say," said Caesar thoughtfully. "Pompey is perhaps incapable of sustained political action. Or perhaps he has no foresight, but goes wherever temporary advantage seems to lead him. But surely an attempt should be made to conciliate him! If we don't use him, the Senate certainly will."

The assembled group stared at Caesar in a hostile silence. The young man was not very well known to them, owing to his recent absence in Asia, and they felt offended by his conceit in thus presuming to advise. There was something striking in his mode of utterance, certainly, but that too irked them; it was too unlike the verbose eloquence they were accustomed to hear.

"I think our consul's proposals are quite suitable, and cover all the g-g-g-ground," said Brutus at length stiffly.

"Well! To return to practical considerations," Lepidus, who had conquered his cough, began again with fervour, dismissing Caesar, in a jerky movement of his hand, as unworthy of further attention: "There is trouble, as we know, in the north, and very probably——"

Caesar bit his lip with rage. He saw suddenly the utter foolishness of the whole affair. The men about him were so inferior ! Brutus was honest but a fool ; Lepidus was a fool and not very honest. Looking at them with an eye trained in Bithynia, Caesar perceived that they were all discontented failures : great men's sons, like Cinna, unsuccessfully aping their ancestors, sinister middle-aged rakes looking to revolution to clear them from their debts, depraved young men (not unlike himself) who wanted excitement and found the idea of massacring their dull senatorial fathers highly attractive. No ! These were not the men to change the Republic. And then the childish business of disguise and password, calculated to destroy, by arousing curiosity, the secrecy they pretended to secure ! His cheek burned as he reflected that he had twice stalked about Rome with his face muffled, like an erring son's slave in a comedy. Ridiculous. O, ridiculous ! Lepidus was at the triumph of the Popular party again. With an exasperated sigh, Caesar slipped out of the room.

In the cooler air of the atrium, however, it occurred to him that perhaps it was not wise to show his opinion of the present conspirators too clearly—they might suspect him of treachery and betrayal, and stick a dagger in his side. He had better wait awhile, and join them again when the party showed signs of dispersing. He strolled out into the peristyle. There was no one about save household slaves. Judging from the position of the house that this side of it might overlook the Tiber, he asked if there were perhaps gardens by the river. Evidently the gardens of Brutus enjoyed some fame, for he was at once led thither without surprise, and on his request left without protest alone. The moon was full, and sailed a clear dark sky serenely ; the solitude was pleasant after the stupidities of his fellow-men. Conscious of a certain soreness about his heart, which the calm night might soothe, he strolled down an agreeable alley framed by close-clipt hedges of box, in the direction of

the river. Presently the alley passed beneath an ivy-grown arch and ceased, and there was an open space with flower-beds and trees, and at a little distance a white figure gliding between the branches. "Ah! Some female slave," thought Caesar, and quickened his step; a little love-making would not come amiss after the tedium of the conspiracy. He moved swiftly, made a neat outflanking movement and stepped so abruptly in front of the woman that she almost fell into his arms. She exclaimed in indignation and stepped backward; her veil slipped from her head and the moonshine lighted her pale face; it was Servilia.

"I ask your pardon!" exclaimed Caesar, and at once forgot his breach of manners in his delight at meeting her again.

He eyed her keenly. Her beauty was as he remembered it, pale, fine, grave, pure; and suddenly he had the sensation that he had met a friend of very old and intimate standing, to whom every confidence was possible, by whom everything was understood; his irritation against the Popular faction fled; everything in the world seemed right.

"I am delighted indeed to see you again," he told her warmly.

She seemed confused and shaken; to give her time to recover he took a few steps at her side, and began to talk in a conventional tone. She fell into pace with him without quite meaning to do so, and they came to the river bank together. The high round moon traced a path of brilliant silver across the Tiber to their feet, and threw white light and strong black shadow on the banks.

"You have a charming garden here," said Caesar, looking about him at the carefully topiared trees and the neat flower-beds bordered by tiny myrtle hedges.

"Yes—I spend much time here," replied Servilia in her low clear tones.

"You are fond of your garden," said Caesar, looking at her with interest. "Tell me," he began, his tone friendly,

very sincere: "How has fortune fared with you, while I have been away?"

"O—very well," replied Servilia quietly. "I have a little daughter now who adds to my joy. You are joining the enterprise of my husband and his friends?" she continued.

"No," said Caesar. (He reflected as he spoke that to confide his intention thus to Brutus' wife might be singularly indiscreet—but was not, because Servilia was Servilia.)

She seemed disappointed. "May I know why?" she asked. "Though certainly I have no right to ask."

"One should never make an armed demonstration unless it is strong enough to be successful," pronounced Caesar. "It is like making a threat which one cannot carry out."

"That is not a very lofty sentiment, Caius Julius!" cried Servilia warmly. "How would anything be done if one waited till success was sure?"

"O, sentiment! I go by reason, fact," said Caesar, amused and pleased to have provoked her to a more intimate tone.

"No fact is true if it disregards feeling," contended Servilia.

"Now you are becoming altogether too philosophical for me," said Caesar, smiling. "But seriously, you would do well, in my opinion, to persuade your husband not to join in this adventure."

"But surely its aims are right? And therefore to support it is right?" said Servilia in a puzzled tone.

"What is the use of supporting something which will fail?" countered Caesar, exasperated.

Servilia looked at him. "You have changed since your sojourn in Asia, Caius Julius," she said in a sombre tone.

"Have I? Perhaps I have," admitted Caesar cheerfully. "One lives and learns."

"Sometimes one learns the wrong things," said Servilia. "Yes, you have changed."

"My feeling for you has not changed, at least," said Caesar warmly.

There was a pause. "I must go in," said Servilia then.

"No—why should you? It is good for us to be here," urged Caesar. "The moon, the river, trees, and a good friend; what could be more pleasing, more agreeable? It does me good to talk to you. Do not deprive me of so much high pleasure so soon, I beg."

A small plaster summer-house, flanked by a pair of tall cypresses and a statue of some archaic Roman with an excessive beard—probably Brutus' ancestor, the erstwhile expeller of the Tarquin kings—stood by the river's brink; he took a few steps towards it. "Let us sit here awhile," he said. Servilia hung back and made a faint sound of demur, but when Caesar turned to her with his brilliant smile, she yielded, though somewhat hesitantly. Caesar seated himself at her side, and for some moments they were silent, enjoying the black and white beauty of the moonlit scene, and the soft ripple of the waves.

"Are you happy with me here?" asked Caesar on an impulse, turning to her.

"Yes," said Servilia.

She spoke in a tone of innocent surprise, like a child, and Caesar's heart was suddenly filled with such a warm flood of feeling for her that he could not resist it.


"Darling," he said in a warm loving tone, and kissed her. Her cheek was cool and soft, like a child's, she trembled beneath his touch; Caesar took her in his arms and kissed her with passion.

"No, no!" pleaded Servilia, her hands against his breast, repelling him.

"Why 'no'?" said Caesar tenderly, gathering her hands in his. "You love me—you loved me years ago, in that quaint country villa. Don't deny it. Don't deny it, my sweet love."

"But my husband—your wife," murmured Servilia in profound agitation, turning from him.

Caesar laughed, put her dusky hair gently back from her ear, and kissed it. He felt a tender amusement that these archaic notions of matrimony should still be believed in by her, still considered binding on the conduct of people like themselves. It showed, he thought, a certain limitation in her mind, a certain lack of grasp and clearness. Still, since she felt it so, it would be kind, and perhaps amusing, to respect it, and not take her till her scruples were overborne by her love. On the other hand it would be enjoyable, too, to tease her sweetly about her scruples and then overbear them. He looked at her searchingly, uncertain which course of love would afford him the most delight. The moonlight, falling softly upon Servilia as she strained to escape his arms, enhanced her grave pale beauty—the exquisite alabaster of cheek and throat, her gentle mouth, the pure curve of her breast—in its silver beam. Tears gleamed beneath her dark silken lashes; as Caesar gazed, her white lids slowly rose, and she looked up at him with a fearful adoration. Caesar decided to let his senses overpower his finer wits, and take by force rather than wait upon persuasion.



SENATE

CAESAR LEANED AGAINST A PILLAR in the vestibule of the Senate-house in the Forum, the Senate being in session within.

On this cold wet winter's day it was neither a dignified nor a comfortable position, but Caesar was not the man to allow either false dignity or comfort to prevent him from doing what he wished, and he particularly wished to hear the Senate's proceedings to-day, partly on Servilia's account, partly on his own. As the Senate sat by law with open doors, this was possible, and had the weather been less inclement, doubtless Caesar's vigil would have been shared by other citizens of Rome, for the business to-day was rumoured to be important. Lepidus, on his way to his province in Gaul, whither the Senate had despatched him earlier than was usual to get him out of the way, had "raised the standard of revolt" in Etruria and "turned his forces against Rome," according to plan, having left his chosen lieutenant Brutus behind him to hold northern Italy in his interest. He had sent the most outrageous letters to the Senate while on the march, demanding a second consulship and a whole series of revolutionary measures; it was rumoured that the most outrageous of all had arrived last night, that a decision on them was to be taken in the Senate to-day, and that the leaders of the Senatorial party were on their mettle against him. Caesar felt that he must if possible hear their deliberations on the subject at first hand, so he stood there in the cold to listen.

As Lepidus had declined to hold the consular elections for the year in the proper manner, Rome was at the moment

without either of her two consuls, and a magistrate of lower rank would preside in the Senate to-day—from where he stood Caesar could see, over the heads of the tribunes of the people, who were seated on benches just within the door, his curule chair in the centre of the hall. He had not yet made his formal entrance, and the members of the Senate, ranged on tiers of benches facing each other on either side of a wide central passage, were talking eagerly amongst themselves, making notes on their tablets, or adjusting the folds of their toga, disarranged by others brushing past—the attendance was large to-day, in view of the special importance of the business in hand, and a few late-comers were hard put to it to find a seat. That rich fellow Crassus, noticed Caesar, was amongst these, wearing a scanty toga which looked as if it had been to the fuller's far too often; he was amused to see how Crassus avoided an empty seat on a front bench, and quietly tucked himself away in the rear. Now the presiding magistrate entered, preceded by his lictors; it was Appius Claudius, who belonged to one of the haughtiest patrician families in Rome—he walked, reflected Caesar, as though the ground were not good enough to be touched by his patrician feet. The Senate rose to receive him, then sat again when he was seated; there was a slight shuffling and whispering as they settled down, then absolute silence.

The spectacle of the rows of white-robed men sitting erect in dignity and order, with a common purpose of ruling for the common good, was an impressive one, and though it was not the young man's nature to be easily overawed, a slight pallor of excitement blanched his cheek. He felt an impatient longing for the day when he too should form part of that revered assembly—for that he would one day form part of it he did not doubt.

The session opened as Appius rose to speak. There was no religious business to be taken, and he began at once upon the matter of Lepidus, by reading the letters he had received from the rebellious proconsul, the night before. It was not

the part of the presiding magistrate to comment, or to propose any resolution, but he allowed sufficient emphasis to mark his arrogant drawl to show clearly enough what he thought of Lepidus' proposals, and murmurs of indignation arose from the members as he read. Caesar listened with a grim smile; it was a lesson in the art of insinuation by tone.

"It therefore appears to me," concluded Appius in his contemptuous nasal drawl, "that the State is in danger, and that the customary decree should be passed, charging those in authority to make it their care that the Republic receive no harm."

A ripple of astonishment ran through the Senate, and Caesar started forward from his pillar, for these words were a sacred formula, and constituted the extreme decree of the Senate, passed only in the circumstances of the gravest danger. "That, for Lepidus!" thought Caesar, and marvelled. Moreover, Appius seemed about to take the vote without discussion—a most unusual step, valid only when general agreement seemed assured. "Surely they won't stand that!" thought Caesar, and sure enough cries of "Consult! Consult!" arose all over the hall from members of the Popular party known to Caesar. The presiding magistrate was obliged in law to accede to this demand; Appius, therefore, in a voice of bored distaste, began to call on the senators in turn, by name, according to their rank on the official list, to deliver their opinion.

The first speech, by an old man who had several times been consul, continued for an unconscionable time; Caesar, bored, began to pace up and down the vestibule, out of sight, to gain a little warmth, every now and then peering round a column to see if the old fellow were still on his feet. (He was.) Almost an hour had passed in this way when Caesar suddenly heard the old man's voice ring out clear and shrill; he was evidently approaching his peroration. The young man hastened to his former post of vantage, in time to hear the conclusion of the speech.

"My opinion therefore is," cried the old man, "that since it has been reported to us that Lepidus is advancing with an army, raised on his own responsibility, in defiance of the authority of the Senate, to the gates of the City"—here he drew his tablets from the folds of his gown and read from them the resolution he was about to formulate—"my opinion is that those in authority be directed to guard the City, and to make it their care that the Republic receive no harm."

Having thus pronounced, in ringing and impressive tones, the same sacred legal formula at which Appius had hinted, the venerable old man sat down, exhausted after his hour's eloquence, and those who approved his opinion showed it by applause.

The first speech delivered on any subject had naturally great weight; several of the senators next consulted said merely: "I agree," and there began to be a general crossing of the floor of the house to the old man's side, in preparation for a favourable vote for his resolution. As the list went on, however, the matter grew more doubtful, and various strains of opposition began to appear. The men of the Popular party approved the measures of Lepidus, desired to see him consul again to carry them, and considered that terms should be made with him; on the other hand a few patricians of the oldest families viewed Lepidus with contempt and thought the extreme decree unnecessary. The largest section, however, consisted of hopeful do-nothings who thought it better to postpone action in the hope of a change in the situation, how to be obtained they did not say. It began to appear as if all these might turn the tide against the first opinion, and seeing this, the old consular rose again. No member of the Senate had the legal right to speak more than once in a consultation, but Caesar had already noticed that this could be nullified by asking permission to put a question to a later speaker, or pretending that one's own speech had been misunderstood and required further explanation; this latter

course was taken by the old man now. It was perhaps not clear, he said, what practical measures his proposal involved; he intended that the honoured proconsul Catulus should proceed at once against Lepidus, while their young general, Cnaeus Pompey, might march northward and crush the trouble in Nearer Gaul.

There was a stir of interest as he spoke these names; the proconsul mentioned was a patrician of great influence, while Pompey was—Pompey. The next senator to be consulted chanced to be a relative of Pompey's new wife, Mucia; his name was barely called before he sprang to his feet and cried out promptly:

"My opinion is that the Republic is in danger, and that the command in Etruria be given to Catulus, and that in Nearer Gaul to Pompey."

"But that's giving Pompey a *separate* command," thought Caesar in astonishment, "making him the equal of a proconsul! And he's held no office in the State at all. But that was not the first proposition! Indeed, it's not a legal one, though natural enough from a relation. Appius will not put it to the vote in that form, I suppose."

The brisk manner of the last speaker had somehow made the Senate feel that they had delayed too long for their dignity and must make haste, for the opinions delivered became much shorter and more rapidly expressed. One senator, who evidently felt uneasy, like Caesar, about the form of the decree, and tried to explain at some length that no separate command should or could be given to Pompey, was interrupted so rudely and often that he was obliged to sit down; and the consultation was soon ended. There was a pause, while Appius arranged and concentrated the various resolutions submitted, and decided the order in which they should be taken; as soon as this was done to his satisfaction, he began to put them to the vote. He took first the grave and weighty decree that the Republic was in danger.

"Those who think this, go to this side; those who think

otherwise, to that," he intoned, indicating with a wave of the hand the affirmative side as that where sat the ancient consular.

A scene of apparent confusion resulted, as members from all points rose and crossed the floor of the house. There was a rush towards the old man; the multitude voting for his proposal was so great that it could hardly find seats to accommodate it. Supporters of the Popular party arranged themselves with perhaps less eagerness on the opposing benches. A few members remained standing for a little time but finally made up their minds and went to their chosen side. When they were all seated, the result of the vote was obvious.

"This side appears the greater," announced Appius, indicating the party of the old man who had first spoken.

"They've taken the whole day to decide, in his sense, what he asked them to agree to at dawn without discussion," reflected Caesar.

"The next proposal before the Senate," intoned Appius, with the bored ease of a patrician whose ancestors had been putting questions to the Senate since the foundation of the Republic, "is that Catulus shall proceed at once against Lepidus, and Cnaeus Pompeius against his forces in Nearer Gaul."

Caesar started and exclaimed. "But doesn't he see," he thought incredulously, "that he's giving a separate command to Pompey? Taking the two together like that! What a muddle! Why doesn't he take the motion about Catulus in general, first? Or does he intend to tack both names together in order to get one through?" he reflected shrewdly.

This time the senators were somewhat slow to move, but gradually they straggled over to the affirmative side in large numbers. The Senatorial party could not possibly vote against their best man, Catulus; while the Popular party remembered cheerfully that Pompey had supported the

candidature of Lepidus for the consulship—he might prove to be on their side again when he found himself near Brutus with an army. Besides, everyone liked Pompey; such a handsome, romantic youth, and his victories really astonishing. Everyone, that is, except Crassus, who, as Caesar observed with amusement, was unobtrusively seated amid the back rows on the negative side.

“This side appears the greater,” drawled Appius at length with a languid gesture.

It was the side which gave a practically independent command to Pompey.

There was a slight pause, while all the members looked, either openly or surreptitiously, towards the bench of tribunes, to see if any seemed inclined to nullify the bill just passed by interposing his veto; but no demonstration came from that quarter—Sulla, by imposing a heavy fine on unjustified tribunician vetoes, had limited this activity considerably. The bill would therefore go to the people's assembly for their consent, and become law.

As dusk was now rapidly falling, and by custom no new business was introduced to the Senate after the tenth hour, Appius intoned the formula of dismissal, and the session was over.

Instantly a great chattering broke out; men rose and leaned over to each other, discussing the events of the day and their own speeches. Some, wrapping their togas more closely about them, hastened towards the doors, where there was a sudden bustle of lictors and slaves. Caesar slipped behind a pillar, and remained unseen by all save Crassus, who had evidently noticed him before, for he quietly approached the young man, though without looking at him, then halted a mere two paces away, and stood there silently. Caesar, remembering his vote on the Popular side, thought he might venture to speak.

“An unexpected result, Marcus Crassus,” he suggested in a deferential tone.

Crassus gave a discreet murmur which might have meant agreement or the reverse, but did not move away.

"Unexpected—and perhaps in some quarters unwelcome?" ventured Caesar.

Crassus raised his little black eyes and directed a searching gaze on Caesar. What he saw in the young man's face evidently satisfied him, for, looking down, his lips barely moving, he observed in a murmur:

"If I carried on my affairs as the present Senate do theirs, I should be bankrupt in a month."

"It is said that you are very far from bankruptcy, however," returned Caesar smoothly.

The two men's glances crossed again, and they smiled discreetly; they understood each other. Crassus made a slight gesture of farewell and moved away. Caesar's teeth suddenly chattered; he discovered that he was chilled to the bone by his long vigil in the rain, and hurried away to his home in the inexpensive quarter of the Suburra.

Lepidus was easily defeated in front of Rome; Pompey, marching northward, drove Brutus rapidly before him and presently shut him in the little town of Mutina, in Nearer Gaul. Here he received a check; for Brutus held out strongly; and the siege dragged on for several weeks, watched with anxiety, though for different reasons, by all parties. At last, this morning, however, Caesar heard in the barber's shop the rumour that Brutus had voluntarily surrendered, and been granted a safe-conduct by the Senate's young general. Caesar, who for Servilia's sake was especially interested, went to the Forum to test the truth of the report, and met a cousin coming out of the Senate on private affairs who confirmed it to him; letters, he said, had been read from Pompey to that effect in the Senate, not an hour ago. Caesar felt a wish to be the one to break this news to Servilia, for he thought it would come less woundingly from his lips; accordingly,

though it was past the customary hour for morning visits, he took his way to Brutus' house.

He found Servilia, as he had so often found her during these last months, walking in the gardens. The Tiber was in spate with the spring rains, and rushed past, turbidly yellow, tossing its mane like a spirited horse; birds twittered in the trees, the sandy paths were damp and the leaves of the box hedges gave out a sharp clean smell. Servilia looked pale and thoughtful; since she had become Caesar's mistress her natural reserve had deepened to a proud still quiet which only lifted when she was in his arms. Her eyes widened in alarm when she saw her lover.

"Why are you here at this hour, Caius?" she demanded.

"I bring you news, both bad and good," replied Caesar cheerfully, walking beside her. "Mutina has surrendered."

Servilia exclaimed, and put her hand to her heart.

"But on terms. Brutus has secured a safe-conduct from Pompey," continued Caesar promptly.

"Ah!" said Servilia. It was a long quivering sigh, which ended in a sob; Servilia buried her face in her hands and wept.

"But I'd no notion you were so much attached to your husband, my dear," said Caesar kindly, concerned by her grief.

"Nor am I," breathed Servilia. And indeed she wept from a tumult of feelings rather than from a single strong emotion; she was ashamed for Caesar that he stood beside her, safe, while so many of his party risked their lives in an attempt to affirm their principles, and yet glad, deeply glad, of his safety; proud of her husband and sorry for him and anxious for him, and yet unable to be glad that he would doubtless soon return to her. All these feelings had in common a kind of anger against her lover, which therefore found expression. She raised a face ravaged by tears, and said: "Please leave me."

"As you wish, my dear," said Caesar in a tone of tender

consideration. It made him sorry to see any woman weep, but especially his sweet and gentle Servilia, and he would have preferred to remain and console her, for few griefs, he felt, retained their full bitterness in a woman's heart when her lover's arm was about her and her head lay on his shoulder. But since she wished otherwise, he would not unnecessarily force her inclination. "As you wish," he repeated, with his friendly smile. She bade him a formal farewell, and stood before him stiffly, her hands at her sides and her head averted. Caesar gave her cold fingers a playful pressure with his own warm supple ones, and withdrew.

From the atrium, as he approached it, there came the sound of children's voices. Caesar smiled with pleasure, especially as he thought he recognised amongst them the gay tones of his own little Julia. She often came, he knew, hither with her nurse to play with Servilia's children; for Aurelia (whose word in Caesar's household was law, especially since her daughter-in-law's health had begun to fail) approved of Servilia, being yet ignorant of her son's intimacy with her. Caesar looked about him as he entered, and saw that he was right: Julia's brilliant chestnut curls were mingled with the dark lustrous waves of the young Brutus and his sister, and the straight brown locks of another little fellow whom Caesar did not know, as they all bent in absorbed contemplation over some object between them on the floor. Caesar smiled, and walking across to the kneeling children looked over their shoulders; they were playing the nut game called "castles," and the little six-year-old Brutus was about to take his turn. As Caesar's shadow fell over the children, they looked up, but were too absorbed to speak to him. Little Marcus aimed carefully at the three nuts on the floor, but either from lack of skill, or from nervousness in the presence of Caesar, the nut in his hand flew completely wide, and a murmur of mingled disappointment and relief rose from the other children. Marcus himself sat back on his heels with an

air of mild resignation so like his mother's that Caesar's heart was touched; he squatted down on his heels behind the little group, and taking the playing nut, which baby Tertia had retrieved, from her soft little palm, shut one eye and aimed it at the three nuts below, very carefully. The nut fell plumb in the middle with a true but gentle course, shook delicately through a moment of suspense, then settled back into position on the summit—Caesar had succeeded, all three nuts were the prize of his skill. He laughed, pleased; the children however did not seem to share his amusement, but gazed at him suspiciously.

"I threw for Marcus," he explained, putting his arm round the boy.

"But of course it can't count," objected the fourth child crossly.

"O no, it shan't count, Cassius," the little Brutus hastened to agree. He turned to look up at Caesar, and fixed his large dark eyes—so like Servilia's in expression—on him in a mournful and offended stare. "That isn't the game, you see," he explained, politely but with a quivering lip.

It was clear that he only refrained from accusing Caesar of spoiling the game out of the same innate noble courtesy which so distinguished his mother. "Decidedly I am not a success here this morning," thought Caesar, gazing into those hurt dark eyes, and he felt rather sad. He rose, and re-adjusted his crumpled toga.

"You did it beautifully, father!" cried Julia loyally, bounding forward and throwing her arms round his knees.

He picked up the child and kissed her; she clung to him warmly, looking down at the other children with a defiant air of protecting her father from all criticism, and Caesar smiled and stroked her curls. She was a singularly beautiful child, very white of skin and delicately made; her eyes were blue like his mother's, and her hair was for some inexplicable reason tawny like an orange. Her heart beat fast,

she was always very swift and earnest about her play; her smile was sweetly loving, and there was a delicious sparkle in her blue eyes when she was reported to Caesar for being naughty, which happened not infrequently. "She will be delicious at marriageable age," thought Caesar, and he patted her charming dimpled elbow pleasurably as he set her gently on the ground. At this moment there was a stir about the entrance of the house, and Servilia's half-brother, young Cato, entered.

Cato's red cheeks grew redder when he saw Caesar thus playing familiarly with his sister's children, and he scowled at the older man menacingly. Caesar gave him a formal greeting and an urbane smile and waited—he had no intention of appearing to defend his presence by speaking first.

"This is a house of mourning to-day, Caius Caesar," began Cato in his harsh monotonous voice. "You have heard the news?"

"Of the fall of Mutina? Yes—but pardon me," said Caesar smoothly, "if I express surprise that *you*, such a supporter of law and order as I understand, are distressed by that."

"I am not distressed by it," said Cato roughly. "May all conspiracies against the State end so."

"The wish is appropriate, for doubtless there will be many conspiracies until such time as the constitution is altered," murmured Caesar. "I understand that a safe-conduct has been granted to the besieged commander in consideration of his voluntary surrender," he went on, not wishing to use Brutus' name for fear of exciting alarm in the listening children.

Cato snorted. "Letters from Pompey read in the Senate this morning announced it," he said in a loud angry tone: "He gave Brutus a guard of horse to the next town. But now further letters have come stating that Pompey has had him put to death for his crimes against the Republic—which of course," he added gruffly, "deserved it."

"What!" exclaimed Caesar in genuine surprise. "Give him a safe-conduct and then put him to death!" He considered a moment. "But what a muddle!" he exclaimed in a tone of disgust. "How like Pompey!"

Cato snorted again and gave him an odd look, in which reluctant agreement struggled with distrust. Then he burst out: "Why did the Senate give the command to Pompey at all? He has held no curule magistracy—he has no right to command the Republic's armies."

"Possibly the Senate couldn't find another general," suggested Caesar, not without irony.

"The conspiracy wasn't as important as all that," grumbled Cato. "Anyone would have done to put it down."

It occurred to Caesar that possibly the importance of a conspiracy in a State—or of a mutiny in an army, or indeed of a revolt anywhere against authority of any kind—lay precisely in the measures it forced the government of the moment to employ to put it down. This seemed to him an important political fact, which however it was useless to communicate to a churlish young Stoic like Cato. The little Brutus on the floor there, playing nuts, would understand it better; indeed he might understand it very well, presently. As if Cato had read the other's thoughts, he stooped to the children, who were all listening intently with heads upturned, not understanding their elders' talk but vaguely alarmed by it, and turning young Marcus' troubled face towards him with his thick strong fingers, looked for a moment into his dark eyes.

"You will have to rely on me now to teach you to be a Roman, my boy," he said, his tone roughly compassionate for the fatherless child.

Caesar gave an involuntary exclamation of regret—on Brutus' account; to that sensitive mind Cato, he felt, would prove a harsh taskmaster. Cato however interpreted it otherwise, as regret for a future member lost to the Popular party which held Caesar's adherence, and as he stood

erect he gave Caesar a contemptuous and arrogant smile.

“Well, I must go and break the news to my sister,” he remarked.

With a curt farewell to Caesar he bade a slave lead him to Servilia, and strode away.

JUSTICE

THE YOUNG MEN, their arms linked so as to make a chain right across the street, came staggering through the City, singing, shouting and laughing uproariously. They were all rather drunk, and had decided on this mode of returning home for no reason but sheer caprice, as a novel termination to a lively evening.

Their progress was wavering and uneven; at one moment they fell over the heels of the slaves in front carrying torches, at another into the arms of the slaves attending them in the rear. On these occasions blows and curses resounded, but the slaves grinned cheerfully; their young masters would need their aid if they were to reach home safely and escape the unwelcome attention of their parents, and such aid (they knew by experience) was usually followed by a suitable donation. Besides, the blows were so wild and whirling that they rarely reached the shoulders for which they were intended. At this moment one of the youngest revellers, Publius Clodius by name, slipped off the edge of the high pavement, lost his balance, clutched wildly at his neighbour, and brought the whole row down into the gutter on top of him. Caius Caesar at once produced a neatly turned obscene comment, and they all roared with laughter as they lay there sprawling. The slaves disentangled them, picked them up and set them on their unsteady feet; they wept with laughter, pointed at Caesar and repeated the remark over and over again with variations, clinging to the necks of their supporters the while. When the merriment died down, however, several knees were found to be bruised

and several hands grazed, and as there seemed a general feeling that after Caesar's joke everything else would be an anticlimax, they allowed themselves to be separated and borne away homewards, held up on either side by slaves, their patrician feet dragging.

Young Publius Clodius, the brother of Appius Claudius, already a singularly accomplished rake for his years, had a litter in attendance. This, for a youth of his age and within the sacred walls of Rome, was a piece of impertinence as senseless as his alteration of the spelling of his family name. No one knew why he preferred to be called Clodius rather than Claudius; but he was angry if any forgot, his thin handsome face flushed at once and an insult flew to his lips. Caesar never forgot, yet never made a show of remembering; perhaps that was why Clodius invited him to ride with him now. The moment the litter was set down the young men fell in headlong and lay there helpless with laughter; their slaves with the skill of habit disentangled their sprawling limbs and tucked them in, and at Clodius' command set off at a trot for the Suburra. They parted in a gale of laughter, amid witticisms from both which made even the slaves look askance, at the door of Caesar's small and unfashionably situated house; flushed with wine, reeling slightly, a bawdy jest on his tongue, Caesar staggered in.

"The letter-carrier has come from Macedonia, sir," said the sleepy slave who admitted him.

"Ah!" exclaimed Caesar in a completely different tone. He threw off his cloak at once, and issued brisk orders—a jug of cold water, some food, his secretary Philemon—as he hastened towards his room.

To his great satisfaction he saw that his table was full of large official-looking scrolls. He bathed his hands and face, stroked his eyes gently with his finger-tips, then feeling refreshed and perfectly sober, sat down to them eagerly. Philemon limped in; Caesar threw some of the letters across

to him; they both set to work to read and open; presently Caesar began to dictate swift notes summarising and collating the information they contained. There began to emerge the outlines of a fearful indictment against the recent Roman governor of Macedonia, Dolabella; almost every possible form of rapacity and extortion was alleged against him, by municipalities or private citizens.

This was not Caesar's first acquaintance with the complaints against Dolabella. On the close of the proconsul's year of office, an outcry had arisen against him from Macedonia rather louder and longer than the provincial outcry usual at the close of a governor's term, and it had occurred to Caesar, as it occurred regularly in similar circumstances to hopeful young politicians on the Popular side, to attack Dolabella in the courts, bring an accusation of extortion against him and subject him to a prosecution. Dolabella was a particularly suitable subject for Caesar's attack, because he had deserted the Popular party and gone over to Sulla just before the proscriptions. The Macedonians on their side were naturally delighted by the suggestion, and promised to furnish evidence and witnesses in plenty; Caesar was now investigating these before deciding whether to proceed with the case. He was therefore expecting to find a mass of evidence against Dolabella in the letters; but he reflected as he read that, had he not seen a provincial governor at work, in Asia, the extent and enormity of the transgressions revealed would have astounded him. And to this man, who had taken bribes right and left, diverted the public taxes to his own coffers, lent State money on interest which he drew himself, traded openly, forced public and private presentations, and even indulged in downright theft—to this man the Senate had actually granted a triumph, for some "victories" over petty border chieftains! Caesar's eyes flashed, and he smiled.

"You are working very late, my son," said a deep voice behind him.

Caesar smiled again as he rose respectfully to greet his mother. "The task interests me," he said.

Aurelia sat down on the stool which Philemon placed for her, and threw the purple-bordered shawl, in which she had wrapped herself on leaving her bed, back from her massive shoulders. She sat very erect, for she despised anything slovenly in dress or carriage. She despised equally, however, anything pretentiously elegant, and her thick greying hair was very plainly arranged about her square vigorous face.

"The Macedonian letters, I suppose? Does the evidence warrant an accusation?" she demanded gruffly.

"There is enough here to convict three proconsuls," Caesar told her, jubilant.

"You will undertake the business, then?" demanded Aurelia.

"I shall undertake it," replied Caesar.

"Caius, it is dangerous," said Aurelia in a calm firm tone, not looking at him.

"I am aware of that," replied Caesar coolly. "But nothing could be more splendid than the opportunity it provides for exposing the gross mismanagement and incompetence of the present system of provincial government. Moreover, I know all the ground covered very well, from my brief but fruitful acquaintance with the pious Thermus."

Aurelia, who had heard the story of the roomful of gods, though not that of Nicomedes of Bithynia, smiled, and her son's likeness to her became apparent.

"I shall prosecute Dolabella, and his conviction is assured," went on Caesar, with a show of enthusiasm rare to him, pacing the floor. "The evidence is irresistible, it is overwhelming. I shall use no old-fashioned eloquence—no thunderous appeals to god and man. I shall not drag in irrelevant remarks about Dolabella's great-great-grandfather (if indeed he had one) to confuse the issue. The case is too good for oratory. I shall simply make a plain clear statement, which everyone who hears can understand."

"H'm," said Aurelia to this, non-committally. She sat erect and motionless, her powerful hands folded in her lap, and looked ahead, considering. "Who was the lad with whom you made that silly disturbance at the door just now?" she asked presently in a cool detached tone.

Caesar smiled. "Young Publius Clodius," he said.

"I don't like that boy," said Aurelia, frowning.

"He's no worse than the rest of us," said Caesar with indifference.

"So much the worse for you," replied his mother calmly. "It is a pity you have forgotten, Caius, that splendid talents do not look well on muck-heaps." She paused, then gave a trenchant summing-up. "If you succeed in this prosecution," she said, "you will have assisted the Macedonians, struck a blow for the Popular party, and taken a considerable step towards the political career you desire by bringing yourself into public notice and public favour."

"Just so," said Caesar.

"If you fail, however," went on Aurelia, "the consequences may be highly disagreeable. Great odium always attaches to the accuser of an acquitted man."

Caesar shrugged his shoulders. "One must risk something," he said. He added in a low impatient tone of intense bitterness: "And I must do something—it is time."

"Then, if you are determined, may it turn out well," concluded Aurelia briefly. She rose, wrapped herself in her shawl and left the room without further speech.

Caesar, pacing the room with his light firm step, dictated swiftly, easily, almost without a pause, for several hours. At last, when the first dawn was creeping in and the flame of the lamps grew pale, he ceased, and came to a standstill before the heavy-eyed secretary. "I think I have forgotten nothing," he said, casting his mind back over the various headings of his indictment. "On such evidence a conviction cannot justly be refused." He expected no comment from the slave, and Philemon certainly dared not make one.

"Yes," said Caesar, his brilliant eyes wide with thought: "All the evidence is there. Sleep now; then transcribe the notes and let me have the fair copy by the evening."

"Yes, master," said Philemon submissively.

The court was assembled; the praetor presided on his curule chair; behind him on semi-circular benches were ranged the rows of white-clad judges, chosen by lot from the senatorial panel, who were to act as jury in the case. On the right of the curve sat Dolabella, his hair dishevelled and his toga dirtied and disarranged in the manner customary to accused persons, at ease between his two famous defenders. The smiling expression of his seamed face, as he greeted his acquaintance or threw a word over his shoulder to some of his clients who stood behind him, contrasted oddly with the artificial pitifulness of his dress. At the other point of the arc sat Caesar, extremely spruce if rather pale; he was amused, though a trifle disconcerted, to find that he actually felt nervous at the thought of addressing this large assembly. For the basilica seethed with the people of Rome; a moment ago they had all been laughing and shouting and restlessly moving up and down, but now that the praetor had appeared and formally taken his seat, they had settled into a tense silence, and thousands of eyes were fixed expectantly on Caesar.

"This is to bring oneself to public notice, in truth," thought the young man grimly. He ran over the heads of what he was going to say, and felt a firm confidence in his indictment—especially as his mother's cousin, who was the junior of Dolabella's defenders, had made to him the night before tentative approaches which Caesar had cut short, because he judged them to be leading to the offer of a bribe to mishandle the case. This was an indication of an exceedingly encouraging kind; an ironic smile curved Caesar's lips now as he recalled it.

At this moment the proceedings began: the heralds made their announcements, and the presiding praetor formally called upon the accuser to state his case. Caesar rose, adjusted his hair nonchalantly with one finger, and began his speech.

"It is the custom of the Roman people, O judges," he said smoothly, "that the highest duties in the State are performed without pecuniary recompense. The soldier in the ranks, the scribe in the court, receive a wage; the general and the jurisconsult do not; above all, the magistrates, whether within the City or without, receive no reward save that of honour. Whether that is an arrangement tending to bring good on the City, or evil, it is not for me to say; but that it is the law and habit of the Roman people, no one, I think, will be found to deny."

Here he made a slight pause, to judge of the effect of this opening, and his quick mind felt a touch of disappointment; it was evident to him that neither judges nor people had perceived the fundamental nature of this proposition, upon which the whole legal case rested. He must, he saw, explain this further.

"Since this is so," he went on—he felt a sudden temptation to add: *and always has been so since the days of our earliest ancestors*, but rejected it scornfully, for what had the founders of Rome to do with the matter, after all—"since this is so, for any magistrate to accept any present of any size, for any cause, is contrary to our honourable custom and a disgrace to the name of Rome. How much more so, then, when the presents are not offered willingly, but extorted by force, or offered not as tribute to past kindness, but in the hope of benefits to come. I shall show you that this governor of Macedonia, this proconsul to whom was entrusted the highest authority possible outside Rome, employed his year of office, not in ruling a province for the Roman people, but in building a fortune for himself and his hangers-on. There is not one section of Sulla's own law against extortion which Lucius Dolabella did not transgress, not one damage which he did

not inflict upon the unfortunate Macedonians. Indeed it is remarkable that he found time to conduct that magnificent campaign for which the Senate voted him so well-deserved a triumph," said Caesar, laughing, "considering the number and extent of his private negotiations."

At this a slight titter broke out amongst the people, in his rear, but the faces of the judges took on a gloomy and forbidding frown. A chill passed over the young man's spirits; this was going to be more difficult than he had expected.

He gathered all his wits, spoke with all the force and clarity at his command; exposed under six clear headings the unquestionable and innumerable iniquities of Dolabella, supported his statements by written and oral evidence of unimpeachable integrity. The faces of the judges remained stony, unmoved; and the people, affected by the lack of interest displayed by their superiors, and finding no drama in Caesar's straightforward exposition, began to be bored too, and grew restless and whispering. "My voice is not as good as it should be," decided Caesar, trying to produce a greater volume of tone and finding it crack shrilly in the effort. The noise in his rear grew and grew until it became a steady hum; Caesar tried to shout it down but his voice shot upwards again with a ludicrous effect; his patience snapped, he swung round and faced the people in a posture of anger, his fine eyes blazing. Immediately the hum diminished, and all eyes were fixed on him respectfully. Caesar smiled and felt a sense of renewed power, but the praetor chose this moment to order silence, and his lictors called for it in stentorian tones. Profoundly humiliated, Caesar swung back to face the judges; but now at last their stony faces had changed, and were wreathed in sardonic smiles. For one bitter moment Caesar felt the desire to throw up the whole thing, break off his speech and sit down with a flounce of his toga and an angry wave of his hand. The temptation was dead as soon as born; with a slight colour in his pale cheek as his only sign of discomposure, Caesar in a quiet cool tone resumed his

oration. He forced himself to omit nothing that he had planned to say, and because he longed so passionately to have finished his speech, made himself utter his words more slowly and emphatically than was his custom.

"If then, O judges," he concluded, "you desire barbarous nations to hold Rome in contempt, as bartering her goodwill like a merchant, acquit this man; but if you desire the City to be everywhere respected for the justice and integrity of her administration, you must necessarily condemn him."

He sat down; to his intense relief a reasonably brisk applause greeted his conclusion. He was drenched in sweat, and had to close his hands to prevent them trembling; glancing up at the water-clock which hung on the wall behind the praetor's head, he observed that the whole course of his speech, in which he seemed to have traversed every possible emotion, had occupied less than two hours.

The famous orator Hortensius, whom Dolabella had secured to defend him, now prepared to speak. He rose to his feet in so stately a fashion that the mere action itself was a drama, and the crowd applauded its old favourite and turned their attention upon him eagerly. The orator made a slight inclination in their direction, a deeper one towards the praetor; then he raised his great curl-crowned head, threw his toga more firmly over his shoulder, extended his massive left arm, and smiling all over his broad fat face, began in a tone of rolling thunder:

"O noble and illustrious judges, drawn from the most honourable and supreme order in Rome!"

"Are they such children that they really like that?" thought Caesar in contempt, eyeing the faces of the judges, which had mostly thawed to a visible degree of affability.

"It is not my custom," thundered Hortensius, "to explain why I defend a certain accused, and not another."

"Now he'll tell us why he is defending Dolabella," thought Caesar cynically.

He was right; it was several moments before Hortensius

left this subject and came to the matter in hand. Indeed one might say he never reached the matter, decided Caesar; his speech was the most intolerable farrago of appeals to the gods, rhetorical questions, elaborate comparisons, historical anecdotes, and fervid sentiments about Rome, all entirely irrelevant, indeed containing not one word about Macedonia or extortion, and very little even about Dolabella, but nevertheless playing throughout on the emotions of the listening mob. Not one single charge brought by Caesar did he so much as mention—that was very astute of him, decided the young man presently, when he had recovered from his surprise, for it would have been impossible for him to refute them. Instead of treating such awkward matters the orator praised Rome, quoting poetry about Father Tiber and the city of Romulus, and weeping over the glorious fables of the City's early days; and then demanded rhetorically whether the Roman people would endure this insult of a prosecution for such an un-Roman crime brought against one of the noblest of their fellow-citizens.

"He'll be calling me a barbarian next," thought Caesar bitterly, while the people cheered.

"The prosecution is an insult to the great Roman people in the eyes of the world!" shouted Hortensius. "Let us repel this insult, judges! Let us prove to the world that there is no stain to be found on our noble magistrates!"

("Yes, prove it," murmured Caesar.)

But this Hortensius had no intention of attempting. The speech went on and on, and the people grew more and more excited. Hortensius was now recounting the history of the conquest of Macedonia, booming out patriotic anecdotes (mostly lies) about noble generals and brave centurions; he made it appear that it was an honour for a country to have a Roman governor at all, and naturally a country which enjoyed that honour, delighted to show its appreciation. "Are we to blame these barbaric and uninformed men," demanded Hortensius in a kindly superior forgiving

tone, "if in ignorance of the Roman law they strove to press upon their governor some token of their joy and pride in him? Are we to blame Lucius Dolabella if, weary with exhortation, he forgot occasionally to repel their friendly demonstrations?"

To Caesar's delight, an intent and curious silence fell upon the crowd at this, however. The orator, swiftly aware, changed his tactics immediately.

"O Rome! O City!" cooed Hortensius as gently as any dove, rolling his eyes heavenwards.

The crowd cheered him to the echo.

Caesar, sitting there still and composed, smiling in as supercilious a style as he could manage, felt sick at heart. In the face of such popular enthusiasm it would be difficult for the judges to condemn, even if they wished to do so. He glanced along the rows of relieved and smiling faces behind the praetor, and suddenly saw the red cheeks and bristling hair of his old friend Thermus among the rest. With a sudden shock he perceived that the judges had not the slightest wish to condemn. He had often railed, in speeches on behalf of the Popular party, against the theory of choosing judges from the Senate, which had been re-established by Sulla; now he came face to face with the reality, and it appalled him. No senatorial judges ever wished to condemn any pro-consul accused of extortion, he saw; because half of them had already committed the same crime and the other half were longing for the opportunity of doing so. A sense of bitter failure stabbed him to the heart; he maintained his dignified pose, his supercilious air, he even looked the presiding praetor full in the eye and smiled haughtily; but he knew he was beaten, and felt a cold and implacable anger, not on his own account but that such maladministration could exist.

Hortensius sat down amid roars of applause.

The voting tablets were distributed to the judges, the urn passed round. Caesar was amused to see with how little hesitation the judges selected the appropriate tablet and threw

it in—their minds were made up, he surmised, before the trial began. Then the tablets were sorted in front of the praetor, by his scribes; the first tablet taken was a C—an *I condemn*—and Caesar's heart suddenly leaped, while the crowd murmured. But the next five, the next ten, the next twenty, all went to the A heap, and the crowd laughed as these absolving votes mounted and mounted. When all the urns were emptied the decision was so little doubtful that the praetor did not even have the votes counted to reveal the majority, but pronounced the verdict of acquittal forthwith, with a smile.

At once Dolabella was surrounded; his clients rushed forward, and the very judges themselves descended rapidly from their benches to congratulate him. Indeed the press was so great that Caesar was hard put to it to keep his feet. His slaves would have locked their arms and forced a passage for him, but he put them aside—a riot was the last thing he wanted—and, smiling composedly, edged his own way through the crowd, which did not hesitate to let him know its hostile feelings by means of jeering shouts and shaken fists.

Once beyond their reach he quickened his step and made his way rapidly homewards.

Aurelia was standing in the atrium awaiting him, at the foot of a couch on which lay his ailing wife.

"Well, my son?" demanded Aurelia in her deep brusque tones.

"He was acquitted," said Caesar briefly.

"Then you must leave Rome at once," said Aurelia.

"I shall leave to-night," said Caesar.

"Where will you go?" asked Cornelia timidly, raising her pale sunken face to look anxiously at her husband.

"I shall go to Rhodes and study oratory," replied Caesar with bitterness.

Servilia was pacing the river path in her garden. There was no moon to-night; only a chill wind which rustled in the leaves and lifted the strands of her dark hair with melancholy fingers. Her face in the dim light which reached them from the porch looked pale, her eyes wide; she had a tragic, distracted air. She came towards Caesar with her hands outstretched; in great need of comfort, he took her in his arms and put his cheek to hers.

"O Caius, I can't endure it, I can't endure it!" she murmured, softly but with passion. "The injustice—O, I can't endure it! Those unhappy Macedonians! O poor things, poor things! Robbed of their gods, their homes, their means of life, and then when they seek redress, scorned and ridiculed! The hateful injustice of it all! And you spoke so well, Caius," she added fondly, taking his face between her hands. "I was so proud of you. Yes, I was there—behind the curtains of my litter. But those Macedonians! What must they think of Rome? O, Caius I can't endure it!" she cried again, and beat his shoulder softly with her palm.

Caesar was tenderly amused by this reception, which was, he reflected, highly characteristic of his Servilia. All these abstract notions—justice, truth, the soul, and so on—buzzed in her head so that there was no room to spare in it for personal considerations. It was like her to be so distressed on behalf of the Macedonians that his own failure was forgotten. He did not wish her otherwise, however, and perhaps her way was as soothing to a disappointed man as any—at least it made him feel that his disappointment was just and noble. He smoothed her hair back from her white forehead, and said in a tone of love:

"Spare a little sympathy from the Macedonians, child, and give it to me."

"I do, I do!" cried Servilia eagerly. "I know how you must be feeling your lack of success, Caius; how you must grieve at such a horrible failure of justice."

Caesar sighed. "I must leave Rome to-night," he said abruptly.

Servilia stepped back and gazed at him in dismay. "Leave?" she said. "To-night? Why? For where?"

"Because it isn't safe for me to stay," Caesar told her bluntly. "I'm on my way now. My people are waiting for me outside the Trigemina gate. I go to Rhodes at once, by sea from Ostia."

"But, Caius," said Servilia, her voice trembling and tears filling her lovely eyes, "you can't go—you can't go and leave me again, like this."

"I must," said Caesar briefly.

"O, you can't, you can't," wept Servilia in anguish. "Some other man will marry me for the sake of my family connections, while you are away."

Caesar made an involuntary movement of surprise, for it had never occurred to him that he might marry Servilia, though it would have been easy enough to divorce his ailing wife and do so. "What a child she is!" he thought. He stepped towards her and was about to begin a protestation, when Servilia forestalled him by saying softly:

"And you won't care." She looked up at him with something profoundly sad and disillusioned in her tear-filled eyes, and murmured: "There is very little you care for, Caius. Nothing hurts you much."

"If you imagine that I find it agreeable to fail and become a public laughing-stock, my dear," said Caesar with intense bitterness, "and see contemporaries of inferior ability in positions of command, while I fritter my life away in silly dissipations for lack of something better to do, you are quite wrong. Nor do I find it agreeable to leave Rome, and to bid farewell to my mother, and little Julia, and—you." His voice changed in spite of himself on the last word, and in a moment they were in each other's arms, taking a lovers' farewell.

"You are not born to fail, Caius," breathed Servilia softly.

"My courage is very low to-night," murmured Caesar. "There is no one in the world to whom I would say that, but you."

Servilia with her finger-tips softly caressed his cheek.

There was a stir in the bushes behind them; they kissed farewell and drew apart. A slave, coughing politely to warn them of his advance, appeared between the hedges and announced that Caesar's steward begged to be allowed to urge an immediate departure.

"I am coming," said Caesar quietly. He turned to his love. "Wish me good luck for my journey, Servilia," he said.

Servilia drew herself proudly erect. "May it turn out well, Caius Caesar!" she said formally in her grave pure tones.

●

PEACE

"THE CAPTAIN would like a word with you, sir," said a sailor in a low tone.

Caesar, who was lounging on a coil of anchor rope, gazing at the sea and the distant coasts, rose with alacrity, for he hoped action might dispel the melancholy mood which had begun to oppress him. The short winter's day was sinking towards dusk, and the rocky peaks and cliffs of the neighbouring islands of the Aegean stood out black and mysterious against the gold diffused by the westering sun. The north-east breeze, which had blown gently all day, was freshening and beginning to moan in the rigging; the square sail strained taut at its ropes, the waves—no longer blue and smiling but chilly violet—slapped the side of the ship with increasing force. The merchant ship *Nauphante* rocked, her oars came out of the sea unevenly, and sudden hissing bursts of spray broke upwards when the crests of the waves caught the dipping blades an unexpected blow. It was an hour when the day's imminent close, so dramatically staged by nature on this wide scene, seemed to demand what use one had made of this and of all other days, and Caesar found himself increasingly dissatisfied with his own answer to that question. "I am growing as philosophical as Servilia," he thought, with a shrug of amusement, and went off in his quick light tread to seek the captain.

He found him—an elderly Greek, stout, hardy and experienced—standing aft by the steersman's high seat, talking to the man with a look of discomfort on his seamed pouched face.

"You'll excuse my troubling you, sir," he began.

"What is wrong?" demanded Caesar quietly.

The captain sniffed. "That ship there to westward," he said. "See? From her cut the steersman here thinks he knows her for a pirate."

"Oh, really?" said Caesar with interest, his melancholy forgotten. He shaded his eyes with his hand, the better to gaze into the eye of the setting sun.

"Don't let the other passengers see you studying her," urged the captain hastily.

Caesar scanned the whole horizon with a casual air, which concealed a keen study of the suspected vessel. "She's overhauling us rapidly," he said.

"Yes, and likely to," said the captain in an unhappy tone. "She's three banks of oars, and look at her sail! She's chasing us, I'm certain."

"But surely she won't attack you while it's still daylight, and only a few miles from shore?" objected Caesar.

"That's all you know about it, young sir," said the captain gloomily. "What's to prevent her?"

"What, under the very eyes of the coastal authorities?" said Caesar, incredulous.

The captain surveyed him with a bilious eye. "What's them?" he asked. "The Asian cities?"

"Asia is a Roman province," said Caesar haughtily.

"O! The Romans!" said the captain in a peculiar tone. He spat. "They're too busy with their own quarrels to bother about us," he said.

Caesar coloured. "Well, I suppose you must either fight or run," he said.

The captain gave a scornful grunt and spat again. "I'm running as hard as I can run, now," he said. "But it won't be any use. I requested your presence to beg you, sir," he went on formally, evidently making an effort to remember his manners, "not to attempt any resistance. I know what you young patricians are. But don't you do it. It only makes

them worse. If you start fighting, we shall all be dead men by sunset."

Caesar gave an exclamation of disgust, and moved away.

There was now no need either to shade one's eyes to look at the oncoming vessel, or to pretend a lack of interest in her; her huge purple sail loomed large and near, the wash from her silver-plated oars tossed the *Nauphante*; and to Caesar's sardonic amusement all the passengers had crowded to the side and were pointing at her, chattering and gesticulating in admiration of her rich equipment, the significance of which they did not as yet realise. The pirate ship now altered her course in a swift sweep, and came so straight for them that the eyes painted on each side of her prow vanished from view; and all at once a crowd of obvious ruffians appeared on her deck, clad irregularly in bright colours, shouting and brandishing long weapons in a tumultuous and insulting fashion. There was a silence of dismay aboard the *Nauphante*, then one of the passengers suddenly shrieked: "A pirate!" At once they all fell into a wild panic, screaming and jostling each other in a maddened attempt to seek shelter below. Caesar retained his position by the bulwarks as well as he could, and eyed the sharp metal beaks on the pirate's prow, which dipped and rose just above the level of the waves, watchfully.

"Do they mean to ram us?" he speculated.

At the last minute the pirates changed their course again and brought their ship very neatly alongside the *Nauphante*, shipping their oars with a swift accuracy which commanded Caesar's admiration. He had little time for this, however, for suddenly the whole world became a mad swirl of noise and violence; the pirates had been brandishing, not spears as he had thought, but long poles, terminating, some in strong hooks, some in knives; with the first they grappled the *Nauphante's* bulwarks to their own, swaying the ship sickeningly sideways; stretching out the others they sawed at her rigging till the ropes parted with a sudden fearful

hum. The yard thereupon slid down with a fearful jarring crash and the square sail collapsed; piteous shrieks and screams rose from within its muffling folds, but no one had time to help the sailors and passengers thus entombed. Their struggles to free themselves made the mast sway alarmingly; they'll have it down if they're not careful, thought Caesar, uneasy, and sure enough there came a sudden loud crack, and the mast swung through the air and crashed to the deck, smashing the steersman's skull.

The pirates were apparently waiting for this, for they now, with a yell of triumph, swarmed over the bulwarks and seized the ship. The captain, who came climbing over the wrecked mast with more courage than his words had promised, they killed at once with a spear through the heart, and tossed several of the sailors, who seemed inclined to resent this, overboard; then driving the passengers before them with shouts and blows, they penned them up in the forepart of the *Nauphante* and dealt with them one by one, taking from each such money and jewels as he had on his person. Some of the pirates, Caesar observed, were gross animals, with such coarse glances and brutal tones as were to be expected, but others were young, well formed and even handsome fellows, whose manner and voice betrayed that they had once been decent citizens.

"I suppose piracy is quite a paying career nowadays," thought Caesar bitterly. He had collected his attendants in a group behind him, and stood quietly awaiting his turn.

"I am a Roman citizen! I am a Roman citizen!" squeaked a shrill voice in Greek.

Caesar stepped up on a coil of rope and, supporting himself with one hand on a slave's shoulder, looked to see what was going on. A very respectable little Roman merchant, a bald round friendly little fellow—Caesar had spoken to him several times during the voyage because he was a client of Servilia's family—had been hauled out for examination, and was protesting thus in great indignation. Everyone had

fallen silent on hearing the name of Rome, and was listening intently. A young pirate, with flashing white teeth and very lively eyes, naked except for some gold earrings and a piece of very handsome blue silk tied round his loins, was about to prod the merchant with a spear, but, on hearing him invoke the City's protection, he stepped back and smote his thigh in exaggerated surprise.

"By Hercules!" he cried. "You must excuse me! I'd no idea you were a man of Rome. Phagitas," he said severely to a heavy lout who gripped the merchant's other arm: "Don't you hear the gentleman? He's a Roman citizen; let him go at once. Down on your knees and beg his pardon!"

Phagitas, thus adjured, threw himself clumsily to the deck, and growled: "Beg pardon, I'm sure!" in execrable Greek, grinning meanwhile so widely as to reveal the full row of his broken and yellow teeth. The little merchant, greatly relieved, swelled out his chest and strutted forward pompously.

"I take it you'll release me at once and allow me to proceed on my business?" he said.

"Oh, certainly, certainly!" cried the young fellow, nodding his head so emphatically that his earrings shook. "But you know you ought to wear a toga to show who you are—anyone might make a mistake about you in a tunic. Take this!" At the word he snatched up a piece of dirty and odoriferous sacking which chanced to lie on deck, and approaching the merchant, wound the stuff so roughly about his body that he staggered. The pompous little man's face took on an uneasy and uncomfortable expression, and he was silent.

"Now there won't be any mistake about your being a Roman," said the young pirate in a benevolent tone. "Phagitas!" he commanded, "Put out a ladder so that the Roman gentleman may go wherever he likes."

Phagitas, still grinning, erected one of the short ship's

ladders against the bulwarks, on the side of the *Nauphante* which lay towards the open sea. Caesar, glancing in that direction, saw hovering in the middle distance another ship of piratical cut.

"Now, sir," urged the young pirate smoothly: "Up with you."

"But——" protested the little merchant. He took a few steps on the ladder, then looked round beseechingly, his friendly little face perplexed and frightened, like a child's. "But——" he began again.

"Oh, get on, you fool!" shouted the young pirate suddenly. He seized his spear and drove the wretched man up the rungs; with a scream of anguish the little merchant stumbled over the bulwarks and fell with a resounding splash into the inhospitable sea. Nobody dared to look over the side or help him, and all too soon his wails and frantic struggles ceased.

"Now, you!" shouted the young pirate, pointing his red-tipped spear at Caesar. "You with the purple stripes! Come out here, and don't be all day about it!"

Caesar at once stepped down from the rope-coil and made his way towards the speaker, the remaining passengers only too gladly standing back for him.

"Another Roman citizen, eh?" grinned the pirate.

"I am a person of wealth and consideration, and will pay a high ransom," said Caesar at once coldly.

"O? What do you call high? Twenty talents?" mocked the pirate, swinging his earrings.

"Say fifty, and you are nearer the mark," drawled Caesar.

The pirate stared at him, then lowered his spear. "Come this way," he said in a tone of awe, and led the Roman towards the pirate vessel.

The hut was a wretched affair of roughly sawn branches,
If

which let in every wind that blew—and every creature that crept, thought Caesar, frowning fastidiously as he picked one of many legs from his spotless tunic. The view from the doorway, against the post of which Caesar was leaning, was certainly admirable, for the hut was high up on the rocky cliffs, but Caesar had already counted the visible islands and made them twenty-three, commanded an account of their history and geography from Philemon and committed it to memory, and now found the interest of the subject exhausted. He had also already despatched most of his suite in various directions to collect his ransom from the Asiatic cities (who were wont to be generous in this matter to young Roman patricians, in the hope of favours to come) and written to Rome to acquaint his friends with his situation. In a word, Caesar had nothing left to do for the next month but manage to keep alive amid his savage captors. The prospect seemed a trifle tedious: the constant surge of waves and sighing of pine trees were beginning to pall, while the rough grass in front of the hut was blown so monotonously in one direction by the relentless wind, that it was positively irritating.

“I shall write a tragedy,” decided Caesar. “Everyone ought to write a tragedy once, and the younger the better.”

The facilities for poetic meditation seemed poor, however, for about thirty feet from the door of the hut allotted to him, in a little hollow sheltered from the wind, a score of pirates were gathered, gambling, arguing, quarrelling over their girls, and in general making an abominable commotion.

“Here!” cried Caesar shrilly during a brief lull in the noise: “Here! You with the earrings!”

The young pirate in the blue silk skirt turned his head and scowled at him. Caesar gave him an affable smile and beckoned, and the fellow unwillingly rolled over and rose.

“Listen,” said Caesar as he reached the threshold: “What is your name? I can’t address you for a whole month without a proper vocative.”

The pirate sulkily muttered some unintelligible syllables.

"I shall call you Titus," said Caesar firmly. "It's an easy name to remember, and it suits you. Titus, will you kindly inform your companions that I need silence and quiet?"

Titus looked at him in astonishment, then grinning in spite of himself, he shouted to his companions in a barbaric tongue. Dumbfounded by their prisoner's audacity, they all turned to look at him, gaping.

"I must ask you to keep silence for a while," said Caesar with assumed severity, enjoying himself. "I am composing a tragedy in Greek."

"What does he say?" muttered the pirates amongst themselves.

"I am composing a tragedy on the subject of Oedipus," said Caesar in a louder tone.

"Never heard of him," declared the brutal Phagitas, with an oath.

"That shows your barbarism, my friend," said Caesar smoothly.

"And what's more, I don't want to," shouted Phagitas, annoyed.

"A shocking lack of taste," said Caesar. "However, it's not of great importance, as you have so little time to live."

At this everyone fell silent, and gazed at Caesar somewhat fearfully, while Phagitas turned pale, and gazed about him at his fellows as if beseeching reassurance.

"Why do you say that? Are you a fortune-teller?" demanded Titus at length.

"No. All of you will be dead within two months," explained Caesar calmly. "I shall crucify the lot of you, myself."

The pirates burst into a great shout of relieved laughter, slapping each other on the shoulder, throwing themselves about on the grass, and explaining the joke to such of their girls as were unacquainted with the Greek tongue. "That's a good one!" they cried, digging each other in the ribs.

"He'll crucify us!" "How will you do it, lovey?" Phagitas asked him in an affectionate tone.

"Oh, just with a cross," replied Caesar indifferently.

This made them laugh more than ever, and several shouted unintelligible remarks which seemed to be invitations.

"What do they say?" Caesar asked Titus.

"They say: A tessera is more amusing than a tragedy," explained Titus, opening his fingers to show the dice within.

"O, certainly! I shall be delighted to join their game," babbled Caesar, starting forward with alacrity. Squatting on his haunches within the gamblers' ring, he shook the dice in the box with a practised air, and crying cheerfully: "Well, here's to your crucifixion! Let the die be cast!" threw three sixes.

The ransom arrived, read Servilia in a letter from her lover, a month later, and the pirates kept their promise to let me go. They sailed me across to the mainland, then in a rowing boat put in alongside a tongue of rock a few miles south of the port of Miletus, whence Phagitas carried me ashore on his shoulders, so that I might not wet my feet.

I went thence directly to Miletus, where I found your letters announcing your marriage to Silanus. I collected there three ships suitable for transport, and borrowed half a cohort of soldiers, who were in quarters in the town, to whom I promised a considerable reward if they should carry out the expedition with success. The next day at dawn we left Miletus and sailed back to the island. The pirates' ships were still lying at anchor in the small hidden harbour which I described to you before; the guards in charge were few, and mostly sleeping, as it was the hottest hour of the day when we arrived. Having killed or silenced them in a few moments, our men set their ships on fire. Roused by the shouts and the smoke, the pirates came hurrying down from their huts above; for whom, concealing ourselves behind some rocks, we lay in ambush. There was a brisk skirmish which extended to the sands, then those of the pirates who were still alive

were driven on board the transports and chained. We found enough booty in their ships and camp to pay for the cost of the expedition.

Having deposited the pirates in prison in Miletus, I set off northward to report to the praetor in charge of the province. This man Junius, a relation of your late husband's, as I suppose, was very unlike my old friend and enemy Thermus, though of a type equally familiar in Rome: haughty, and as indolent as impecunious. He proposed that the pirates should be allowed to ransom themselves at a heavy price, as this would be of more value than their carcasses. I begged leave to differ; whereupon he said that he was too much occupied making preparations against Mithridates, who, as you doubtless know, is again threatening the Roman province, to trouble himself about a handful of thieves. I thanked him and withdrew, then repaired at once to Miletus, and commanded the prisoners to be brought before me. Unshaven and pale, with their wounds untended, they huddled behind each other and stared at me mournfully. Then Titus spoke, reminding me that they had used me with kindness, allowing me to share their games and their exercises; and they all began, weeping, to beg me to give them pardon. But I said that crucifixion was the fit punishment for their crime and their insult to the name of Rome and that what I had promised I should perform. Yet I had pity on them; such strong men would need two days at least to die on the cross, a torment fearful by reason of its length. Their lives were forfeit, but there was no need to break their spirit by torture and cause them to die despising their own courage. I therefore repeated the order for their crucifixion, but commanded their throats to be cut first. At this they all applauded, laughing and praising my clemency. I commanded the crosses to be erected on a neighbouring headland, so that they should be clearly visible from the sea.

I have written to you at this length about the matter, my dear Servilia, lest you should hear contradictory and alarming reports of my misadventure. I am by no means dead, and hope to be of service to Rome against Mithridates, though doubtless the affair will be mismanaged, as is customary nowadays. Give my love to little Brutus, and tell him as much of this story as you think fit. I am sending by another letter-carrier the model of a ship, carved in cedar wood, which

we found amongst the pirates' treasures; Brutus can sail it in his new stepfather's fishpond, that is, if his uncle Cato will allow him to approach such a luxury as a fishpond, as to which I am doubtful.

Farewell, my dear. Take care of your health, and assure yourself that no one is dearer to me than you are. Love me and farewell.

Servilia saw the little merchant choking in the salty waves, the steersman squashed like an insect, the rows of blackened and shrivelled crucified gazing from sightless eyes out to sea.

"Do we not boast of the Roman peace?" she murmured.
"Why must such things be?"

She let the roll slip from her fingers, and sighed heavily.

BOOK III

TWO AND TWO MAKE FOUR

FORTUNE'S FAVOURITE

SINCE THE REBELLION CONTINUED in Spain, since the Senatorial generals sent thither seemed unable (for the usual reasons of indolence and corruption) to cope with it successfully, since Pompey was hanging about with the army he had employed against Brutus and seemed disinclined to dismiss it, the Senate at length decided to kill two birds with one stone, as they thought, and match the rebellion with Pompey—or Pompey with the rebellion; whichever way the event should chance to turn would be almost equally useful. The sticklers for constitutional procedure were again shocked by the notion of entrusting proconsular power to a man who had held no magistracy and was not yet of an age to enter the Senate, but as the law had already been broken in Pompey's case, with the result of putting him in a position of ascendancy highly disagreeable to the Senate, it might surely be broken again in the hope of robbing him of that ascendancy. Pompey's friends wished him to have the opportunity of gaining further distinction, his enemies wished to get him out of the way for a few years; the appointment was voted; Pompey set out for Spain in high delight.

His experiences there were at first not altogether agreeable. It was easy to obtain a moral ascendancy over the general to whom he had been sent as colleague—anyone who was decently honest, and did not care to carouse more than once or twice a week, could soon do that. It was easy, by displaying ordinary justice and strict attendance to duty, together with one's handsome person and physical prowess, to impress the army and restore it to proper Roman discipline.

It was not so easy to defeat a Spanish army officered and led by rebellious Romans who had fought many a campaign under that wily old wolf Marius. It was not easy even to come near enough to that army to fight it at all; for the physical features of this tiresome country offered immense obstacles to the heavy-armed Roman soldiers and natural fortifications to the swift light Spaniards; the numerous rivers were always either in such flood that they were impassable or so dry that there was no drink for horse or man, the bare brown mountains, disgustingly steep and contorted, offered endless opportunities for ambush which the enemy never failed to take. The movements of this army, too, which combined barbarian mobility with Roman discipline, were hatefully incalculable; when one thought one had the whole lot hedged in (and had unfortunately written to Rome to say so), a large hostile force suddenly appeared from the opposite side of the horizon, and before one knew what was happening one was hedged in oneself. There was one awful moment when Pompey, having at last forced a pitched battle, seemed about to lose, not only the battle but his life; the wing he commanded was driven in, he was surrounded by the enemy and set upon ferociously, and only escaped by swiftly slipping from his horse and leaving its gold trappings to be plundered by his attackers, who were thus delayed. Each side claimed the victory on this occasion, but Pompey was in reality only saved by the arrival of his co-general, to whom he found it very disagreeable to be under an obligation of this kind.

And presently, as if all this were not bad enough, Pompey's money and supplies ran out, and the Senate were unspeakably dilatory in sending more. Pompey wrote letter after letter, giving details which should convince a mule, much less such a sage body as the Senate; but nothing came. Unable to believe that the delay was deliberate, Pompey spent and spent, at first cheerfully, later with growing resentment; he exhausted his own private means, drew upon his

own credit to the utmost ; still nothing came from the Senate, and his soldiers lacked both wages and food. At last he dictated what he meant to be a decisive letter to the Senate, complaining bitterly of their treatment ; if they thought so little of his cause, himself and his army, said he, he should prefer to relinquish his command. The thought of never having to negotiate another bare mountain, another foaming stream, afforded a delicious relief for the moment ; but when the despatch was read over for signature, his conscience pricked ; he had spent several years here, after all, and it seemed unworthy of a Roman to abandon a cause so long contended ; besides, the letter when read aloud sounded a little petulant.

"What do you think of it, Demetrius ?" he asked in a doubtful tone, turning to his freedman.

"Nothing could be more suitable than your letter, Cnaeus Pompey," said Demetrius instantly. "It might perhaps be well to make it clear that if you relinquish your command you will return at once to Rome."

"Naturally I shall return to Rome," said Pompey peevishly. "Where else ?"

"And with the army at your back, ready to be employed elsewhere," murmured Demetrius.

"Naturally," said Pompey as before. He was silent a moment, frowning a little, thinking with longing of the command against Mithridates for which he yearned—distinction, wealth, power were to be had there in plenty. He realised, slowly, that Demetrius' suggestion would enable him to hint this in his letter to the Senate. "Emend the letter in that sense and read it to me again," he commanded stiffly.

The reading of this letter to the Senate by the consul presiding resulted in a very swift and adequate despatch of money and equipment to Pompey. His friends wished a successful conclusion to his campaign, his enemies wished to keep the appointment against Mithridates for a senatorial

general whose allegiance could be relied on—in a word, for the consul who was reading the letter. Thus reinforced, Pompey (with a sigh) continued the struggle perseveringly. He was making perhaps steady but certainly slow progress when a lieutenant on the other side in a fit of envy obligingly murdered his general, and at once everything fell into Pompey's hands. He received the submission of some of the enemy thus bereft of their leader, defeated the rest, executed the murderer, forgave the Romans of lower rank, who naturally at once adored him, pacified the country, and set off homewards in a happy victorious mood.

On the way he received letters from the Senate which surprisingly urged him to hurry; a rising of slaves in Italy had assumed alarming proportions, the very City itself was threatened, and Pompey was urged to go to the aid of Crassus, who as one of the praetors for the year was putting down the revolt, without delay. When he had read this last item, Pompey involuntarily smiled, and Demetrius' smooth face mirrored his amusement.

"Crassus will not be pleased," murmured the freedman slyly.

Pompey banished his smile at once. "In the service of the Republic personal rivalries play no part," he announced with his haughtiest air.

"Very true," agreed Demetrius respectfully.

In obedience less to the Senate than to his own inclination, Pompey thenceforward forced his march—as far as seemed consistent to him with the dignity of a Roman army. Later messengers informed him that it was Crassus himself who had urged the recall of all the Republic's not-too-distant armies and generals; at this Pompey, really alarmed for the City, went considerably faster. He entered Italy, his army behind him; at every town and village he approached the people rushed out to meet him, cheering and laughing, and shouting friendly commands to him to get to work on the slaves promptly: "Pompey the invincible!" they cried.

"Pompey's the general for us!" The women's eyes brightened in admiration as they rested on the handsome youth, while the children, charming shy creatures, threw their little bundles of flowers timidly before him; he threw them gold pieces in return, and how the people cheered! Pompey smiled happily and savoured to the full the pleasure of being a popular hero. That, he felt, was his true function, that was the line to take: Pompey the hero of the people! And let the Senate look to itself—he had not forgiven it yet for half-starving his men. He spoke in this sense to friends and clients who came out from Rome to greet him; and after this young Caius Caesar suddenly turned up one afternoon, dusty but cool and smiling, and, sympathising over the Senate's parsimony in Spain, slipped in the query whether Pompey was really thinking of flouting the Senate to pay off that old score, as everyone seemed to expect? Whether, for instance, he would be willing to help restore their full powers (so lamentably curtailed by Sulla) to the tribunes of the people? Delighted to find such a popular measure lying ready to his hand, Pompey eagerly agreed. Caesar was off again within the hour; a most impetuous young man! Pompey could not now enter Rome, as he was hoping for a triumph for his Spanish victories, but marched round it towards the south, where Crassus, it was now said, had penned up the slaves and had the revolt well in hand. This last news was disappointing; but Pompey hurried on, hoping still to be in time to gain some credit.

Again his fortune served him well. He met five thousand fugitives, running away after a battle in which they had been severely beaten, slew them to a man, and was able to write a haughty letter to the Senate, saying that Crassus had indeed won a battle, but Pompey had plucked up the whole war by the roots. The saying was repeated all over Rome, amid chuckles and nudgings of the ribs, together with the victor's promise about the tribunes; Pompey was the people's darling of the hour. He applied for a triumph; the Senate

perforce decreed him one; Romans could not triumph over Romans, but by a convenient fiction the war was treated as if conducted against Spaniards alone. One could not triumph for success in such a disgusting business as a revolt of slaves, either, as Pompey (who was already somewhat ashamed of that grandiose despatch about the five thousand) took pains to announce rather often; it did not fall to Crassus' lot, therefore, to wear the laurel. The Senate, feeling that he had been badly treated, offered him the minor ceremony of an ovation; Crassus accepted, and entered Rome processionally on foot, myrtle-crowned.

"Imagine Crassus accepting an ovation!" said Pompey, genuinely surprised. "I should have thought it beneath the dignity of so rich a man."

This saying too, was repeated, and it became the fashion to snigger over Crassus' myrtle; for Crassus, like so many of the rich, was rather mean.

The cry now arose on every side: Pompey for consul! As Pompey had not even entered the Senate, not even held the lowest office of quaestor, the notion was quite preposterously against the law; but what could the Senate do? The people's clamour for their hero was strong and unceasing; Pompey's Spanish army, devoted to its leader, lay still at the very gates of Rome; the necessary permission could not be withheld. Pompey's elation reached its height when Crassus, who had passed through all the magistracies in proper order and reached the correct rank and age for consul, actually called upon Pompey to enquire whether his own candidature would be agreeable to the young man.

"But of course! Of course!" cried Pompey. He spoke sincerely, and not only because Crassus too had an army—though less large, less experienced, and less devoted than Pompey's—lying at the gates of Rome. He had suddenly seen how mean, how undignified, how, in a word, like Crassus, he would be, if he kept the older man from the highest

office, simply from jealousy or personal dislike. "Of course!" repeated Pompey vehemently, flushing.

"If we should chance both to be elected, you believe we could work amicably together?" pressed Crassus in his discreet expressionless tones, staring into the corner of the room.

"For the good of the Republic? Certainly," replied Pompey with emphasis.

Crassus blinked and was silent for a moment, then said: "On measures for the good of the people we should doubtless be at one."

"Certainly," agreed Pompey again, not seeing much point in this remark, which he regarded as a poor paraphrase of his own.

"Then I shall continue my candidature," said Crassus quietly. "I thank you, Cnaeus Pompey."

Pompey, still a little flushed and uncomfortable, bade him farewell with every mark of honour, and hastened to tell Demetrius that he should support the candidature of Crassus as his own. Demetrius looked surprised, but presently observed thoughtfully:

"Thus putting him under a considerable obligation."

"You mistake me, Demetrius," protested Pompey pettishly. "That is not the reason for my decision."

"Not the reason but the result," murmured Demetrius, smiling.

Pompey frowned, but presently, catching Demetrius' eye, gave an involuntary laugh. Demetrius at once released his mirth in a roar, and they laughed together boyishly.

At the elections Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus and Marcus Licinius Crassus were duly voted consuls.

Their year of office was not, however, very comfortable to Pompey. To begin with, as he had never attended a sitting of the Senate before the day on which he had to preside over that venerable body, he was obliged to take lessons in the proper method of addressing it, consulting, taking the vote, and so

on, and found himself actually nervous in these matters so strange to him. Then, too, he found, most disconcertingly, that he was not a very good speaker: he had a tendency to vague repetitions, which he broke off, when he saw he was wearying his audience, into abrupt statements which sounded much too haughty and rude. Crassus never helped him by a soothing compliment on his conduct of affairs, but preserved a prosaic and unimpressed demeanour, very trying to his sensitive colleague. True to his new pose of popular hero, Pompey at once secured the restoration of the tribunician power, but was less enthusiastic when Crassus mentioned the question of widening the panel of judges for political crimes so as to include other than senatorial ranks. Pompey could not at first bring himself to discuss the measure seriously; he disliked the notion of Roman governors' dishonesty so much that he could not bear to admit it existed, and also (perversely) felt that he himself could never stomach being impeached in front of a lot of ragtag and bobtail judges, drawn from anywhere, who knew nothing about government of any kind. He said so. Crassus blinked at him, and remarked merely:

"The Popular party will expect it."

"I am not responsible to the Popular party for my actions," said Pompey haughtily.

At this Crassus opened his beady black eyes wider than Pompey had ever seen them. "Their votes elected us—I understood you to say, when I interviewed you about my candidature, that you were supporting that party," he said, his tone revealing real surprise. "Caius Caesar certainly gave me to understand so."

Pompey winced and coloured. He now saw that his recent actions amounted to a deliberate transfer of his allegiance to the Popular party, but he had by no means intended anything so definite, and he felt tricked. He began to exclaim in this sense, when he thought he saw a gleam of contempt in Crassus' eyes; hastily changing the subject,

he agreed to support, and even to introduce, the judiciary measure. Later, to show that he brought in a measure so hostile to the senatorial governors from genuine conviction and no other motive, he became very emphatic about provincial misbehaviour altogether, and encouraged that rising young orator, Marcus Cicero, to prosecute a notorious provincial governor, vehemently. The appalling misdemeanours which the case brought to light, and the condemnation of the accused by the new judges, convinced him that he had acted rightly. But the glory of his consulship was spoiled for him: it irked his sensitive spirit profoundly to be the tool of other men, even in a just cause.

Crassus meanwhile proceeded to the customary annual provision of corn for the people of Rome. The Roman corn-supply, between the depredations of pirates and the manœuvres of speculators, was an everlasting source of worry to the authorities and fury to the people, and Crassus' arrangements were abused as niggardly and inept. Pompey, who felt it a personal insult to be connected in any way with any measure stigmatised as niggardly, fumed and proposed grandiose activities in all directions; Crassus stared at him coldly, slightly sniffed, and made Pompey's proposals appear ridiculous by the application of a little sound (but to Pompey so sordid) common sense. It was all very uncomfortable and vexing, and Pompey cast disappointed eyes upon the war in Asia, which unfortunately seemed to be almost won. He haughtily declined to accept the less important province decreed to him by lot, which he should have taken at the end of his year of consular office, and thus obliged Crassus, from motives of dignity, to do the same. But no one seemed greatly impressed by this self-denial on his part; indeed with Crassus at one's side, thought Pompey impatiently, it was difficult to make any impression at all. At last, however, he thought he saw his way to a notable stroke. The censors were holding their annual review of the equestrian order, when those who had served their legal

military time had to appear, give an account of their service and receive their discharge, honourable or the reverse, as the case might be. Pompey had an inspiration; wearing his consul's dress, and preceded by the lictors proper to his office, he led his horse with his own hand down into the Forum and presented himself before the censors' bench. The crowd gathered to watch the review were astounded at this unusual behaviour, while the censors remained speechless for a moment from sheer surprise. At last the senior censor gathered his wits enough to remember that Pompey, though consul, came by youth and birth under the equestrian rule, and intoned the customary question:

"Pompeius Magnus, I demand of you whether you have served the full time prescribed by law?"

"Yes," cried Pompey in a loud ringing voice: "I have served all, and all under myself as general."

At this, such prolonged applause rose from the people that no further business could be transacted; as fast as the shouting sank it swelled again to greater force. Pompey stood there smiling boyishly, the sulky horizontal frown of worry which had lately marred his young forehead quite smoothed away, his brown eyes beaming. At length the censors, yielding to the popular demand, descended from their bench of state and escorted their young consul home, the people following, shouting and clapping tumultuously. Pompey was deliriously happy.

Naturally he expected Crassus to make at least one complimentary reference to the unprecedented scene when they met on official business next morning; but Crassus said no word, and at last Pompey could not forbear to mention the matter himself (though he was vexed with himself for doing so) just as the consuls were entering the Senate.

"You heard that I completed my legal period of service yesterday?" he threw out with a casual air.

"Yes. Was it wise," returned Crassus in his discreet

prosaic tones, "to emphasise thus the illegality of your election as consul? I hear young Cato spoke very strongly on the subject last night, at his dinner-table."

Pompey, choking with anger, had no time to reply, as at that moment they made their formal entrance, but when they were seated he threw out petulantly, in a loud tone, meaning to be heard: "I am glad we need not be tradesmen to-day, and deal with pecks and copper coins."

Crassus received this allusion to his corn distribution in silence with his customary fixed smile and absent stare, one finger resting in the palm of his other hand, as usual. But he too knew how to make sarcastic allusions; and when reading part of a despatch from the Asiatic seat of war which honourably mentioned a certain officer fallen in fight after many years' service, he added with a smile: "Not, however, all served under his own generalship." The Senate tittered; Pompey flushed. From that day the consuls bickered constantly, both in private and public, and their discord was known to all.

So well known it was, indeed, that when at last the day came for the pair to lay down their office, and they were each giving, as the custom was, an account of their year's acts in a speech to the assembled people, a tiresome hysterical old fellow stood up and began to scream out, in a very countrified accent, something about a dream he had had, in which Jupiter had appeared and commanded that the consuls should not be suffered to lay down their charge till they were reconciled. He had vowed, therefore, to do his utmost to effect it. ("I'm surprised Jupiter understood his Latin," murmured Demetrius at this with his tongue in his cheek.) This was the kind of notion which appealed strongly to the emotional Roman crowd; they all shouted approval and gazed at their consuls expectantly. Pompey coloured and looked down his nose; he simply could *not* bring himself to make the first advance towards Crassus. There was an awkward pause. Crassus, however, terminated

it. He advanced towards his younger colleague with outstretched right arm—Pompey was obliged to yield his own and Crassus took it in his dry, scaly fingers—then turned towards the people, and announced in a plain sensible tone:

“I cannot think, fellow-citizens, that I do anything unworthy of myself in making the first proffer of friendship to Pompey, whom you yourself called Great before he came to man’s estate, and decreed a triumph before he entered the Senate.”

The crowd cheered, and Pompey forced a smile. The situation had been neatly turned and apparently in his favour; yet Crassus had cleverly made himself appear the more generous of the pair, a stroke peculiarly annoying to Pompey.

“I am not formed to deal with votes and crowds, Demetrius,” he said irritably after his ceremonial return home, when the crowds who accompanied him had left and he was sitting quietly beside his wife’s couch. Mucia, who had recently borne their second son, was still pale and weak, and Pompey held her hand and regarded her with tender solicitude.

“But you didn’t speak first, darling,” urged Mucia fondly, laying her husband’s fingers on the baby’s soft round head, so that the sense of his son’s warm life might console him. “Crassus had to give in, not you. Didn’t he, Demetrius?”

Demetrius hesitated a moment only before he said with emphasis: “Arms become heroes best,” but Pompey was not blind either to the pause or to the significance of the reply, and his sore heart was still further vexed.

“I am not formed to deal with votes and mobs,” he muttered again, contempt and anger in his tone.

Indeed his self-esteem was too sensitive for the jars of active political life, and he did not easily recover from the disappointments and indignities of his consulship. Loth to

attempt political life again, he pretended a kind of scorn, and really felt a strong distaste, for the arts of the Senate and the Forum, and absented himself increasingly from both during the next two years. Then too, although he was often urged to attack or defend in the courts, he always refused—he remembered his own ineffectiveness as a speaker, too well; besides, he disliked the notion of pleading another's cause: it was beneath the dignity of Cnaeus Pompey. Having commanded so long in camp, he was not at ease among his equals, in the Senate; a condescending affability to his inferiors he could always manage, however, provided they did not annoy him by sordid demands, and something gentle in his manner endeared him to them—his clients were innumerable and devoted. He defended himself by pointing this out, irritably, to Demetrius when the freedman remonstrated with him for appearing so rarely in public and allowing his influence to sink; Crassus had his hands always full of other people's business, said Demetrius, Crassus would undertake almost any case, and invariably prepared it thoroughly and spoke in a capable if unexciting manner, Crassus was discreet but familiar, Crassus—

“I am not like Crassus,” said Pompey haughtily.

“But if people never see you, how are they to know that, darling?” observed Mucia shrewdly, tossing her plait-crowned head.

Stung more deeply than he would admit by this, Pompey said crossly that he would attend the Senate on the morrow.

So many instructions were given about this unusual event and so many clients' attendance commanded, that when at last Pompey left his house at a late hour the following morning, the procession rather resembled a triumph than a mere private outgoing, and people ran to watch it pass, so that all Rome seemed concerned because Pompey chose to go to the Senate. Pompey was secretly pleased by the effect his unwonted appearance had upon the populace, and though he did not exactly resolve that his public appearances

should always be thus rare and hedged about with ceremony, somehow they always happened to be so.

This proud isolation, this lofty reserve, satisfied a deep need of his nature and made, as even Demetrius was obliged to admit, a strong impression on the people, but it vexed the lively Mucia and left Pompey's days very empty; he grew increasingly restless and impatient, and longed for public employment—which, however, he was much too proud to look for himself; he could never stoop to ask, but must always be solicited. The clear-sighted Demetrius, to whom alone he expressed his irritation, consoled him by remarking that it could not be long before the Senate made some blunder somewhere which would necessitate the intervention of the only victorious general Rome possessed; and Demetrius was right. The trouble with Mithridates began again, disastrously, and the pirates, seizing the opportunity of this distraction, carried their ravages to such a pitch that corn grew scarce in Rome and its price rose to intolerable heights, while no one was safe anywhere unless a substantial mountain barrier protected them from the sea. Even Ostia, the port of Rome itself, was attacked by the daring marauders. Rome was in a fury at the Senate's mismanagement; and one evening Demetrius mentioned in a low significant tone to Pompey that a certain tribune was considering the proposal, in the people's assembly, of a special law.

"A law?" queried Pompey with assumed indifference. He remembered the tribune mentioned vaguely—a turbulent loquacious fellow, with a face like a frog.

This law, proceeded Demetrius, feeling his way with his sensitive patron carefully, would instruct the Senate to choose some man of consular rank, to whom immense powers were to be entrusted, for the specific purpose of sweeping the pirates from the sea. The consular could be mentioned by name—or not, added Demetrius, but the man intended was in either case not doubtful.

"I would rather know nothing of it," said Pompey hastily, recalling a disagreeable story or two against the frog-faced tribune.

"He simply wishes to know that the proposal would not be displeasing to you," said Demetrius smoothly. "May I tell him so?"

Pompey, colouring, aware that Demetrius had arranged the matter, aware that the tribune would expect a solid reward, but declining to admit even to himself that it was so, made a slight assenting movement with his hand.

Accordingly the tribune introduced his law, not in the Senate but in the assembly of the people, who received it with tumultuous joy. To confer a military command thus was a complete departure from constitutional procedure, and the Senatorial party was therefore as furious with the manner as with the matter of the bill. When Pompey's tribune took his seat on the bench in the Senate after proposing the law, he was greeted with a storm of hisses and angry shouts, fists were shaken at him, and some rash young patricians actually threatened him with physical force. The people in the Forum outside, hearing this disturbance, rushed in to rescue their tribune, the supporter of their darling Pompey; some of the senators fled, others found themselves in such danger that only the interference of the tribunes themselves saved their lives. At this moment fortunately the sun set, and the presiding consul with a trembling voice pronounced the session closed. The resources of the senatorial opposition were not exhausted, however; they set to work to find a tribune who would interpose his veto on the day of voting the measure in the assembly, and were successful in finding two—or bribing two, as Pompey indignantly commented when Demetrius told him the story—who promised to do so. Meanwhile speeches on both sides from the Rostra in the Forum filled the air; Caius Caesar made a very amusing one in Pompey's favour, describing an adventure he himself had undergone with pirates, which

set the whole Forum in a roar. Pompey smiled benevolently when this was told him; it was beneath his dignity to make witty speeches himself, of course, but he liked to have wit ranged on his side. As a result of this speech he invited Caesar to dinner, on the pretext of celebrating his recent marriage to one of Pompey's cousins; but he did not enjoy the occasion greatly. Caesar, who had entered the Senate last year on his election as quaestor, had attracted a good deal of attention to himself by making funeral speeches, on the death of his aunt (Marius' widow) and his wife, which were really political orations in favour of the Popular party; he had also restored the statues and tablets commemorating the deeds of Marius, removed by Sulla, to the great joy of the people, at his own expense. In a word, Caesar was a most hot-headed and determined young "Popular," and Pompey found his outspoken political comments vaguely disagreeable, and went to bed after he had left in a cross and discontented mood, deciding that he disliked extreme views of any kind. Besides, Caesar had giggled too much with Mucia; he was alleged to be very successful with women, and Pompey did not like his manner with them—it had too much sparkle, too much undignified charm.

The day for the vote on the new law arrived. Pompey, in spite of Demetrius' protests, left Rome quietly at dawn. His pride would not suffer him to sit as it were waiting in an ante-room while others settled his fate; still less would he appear in the assembly and attempt to sway it in his favour. Of the two tribunes who had promised their veto to the Senate, one yielded promptly to the popular clamour and withdrew, but the other persisted; Pompey's friend thereupon proposed that he should be deprived of his office, and pressed the matter to a vote. There was a hush of awe at this, for such a proposal had not been made for nearly sixty years, since the days when first the Popular party raised its head against the Senate. When half the total

tribes had voted against the tribune who thus opposed their will, so that one more adverse vote would depose him, he gave way and withdrew his veto; the business of the day proceeded, and the new law was triumphantly passed. So certain was Pompey's success against the pirates considered that the price of corn fell at once. The people rejoiced tumultuously, the Senatorial party gnashed their teeth with rage; Pompey's quiet return to Rome by night, however, in order to avoid a public reception, pleased both factions.

Pompey of course received the command, which comprised unprecedented powers; indeed no other nomination was possible.

Immediately he became bright, happy, capable, energetic; his worst enemy could not allege that he used the tremendous powers allotted him other than in the service of the State. Even young Cato, who loathed the appointment with all his heart, grudgingly admired Pompey's hard work and his honesty, and accepted a lieutenancy in the immense fleets which Pompey at once gathered from all sides. Pompey planned the campaign during the remainder of the winter, began it in the spring, and by the middle of the summer finished it, leaving not a pirate in the whole Mediterranean at large. His fame rang through the world; the brazen beaks from a hundred robbers' vessels were the proud ornament of his house and the admiration of Rome; everyone sang the praises of Pompey. Even the Senatorial party in Rome, perceiving that nothing could be done against such a victorious general without great odium, became for a time effusive and congratulatory.

When Pompey had finished with the pirates he did not immediately return to Italy, but paid ceremonial visits to Grecian cities, enjoying their objects of art and the conversation of their philosophers. It was during this stately progress that he received letters from Rome, announcing that he had been entrusted, on the proposal of another tribune, with the

command against Mithridates, and was to supersede immediately all other generals in Asia.

A smile of intense gratification spread over Pompey's face. For a full moment he forgot his dignity, forgot that he had received the news in public, and indulged his happiness like a child. Then the smiling congratulatory looks around him impinged on his mind, with a start he came to himself, and to cover up his momentary lapse from dignity began to talk rapidly in a high affected tone.

"What labours upon labours!" he said mincingly. "What toils upon toils! If I am never to end my service as a soldier, nor escape from this invidious greatness, and live at home in the country with my wife, I had better have remained a man quite unknown."

Demetrius, who thought his patron was talking too much and appearing rather silly in these disclaimers, which did not conceal his real delight, began to read a passage from another, private, letter, to the effect that Cicero the orator had made a magnificent speech from the Rostra in Pompey's favour; a copy of the speech was attached, and Demetrius quoted from it resoundingly. Pompey's face took on its happiest and most boyish air as he listened to the superbly eloquent phrases commending his own valour, skill and fortune.

He proceeded rapidly to Asia, superseded the senatorial general there with a rudeness partly intended and partly due to his customary haughty awkwardness, and began, with his usual sober diligence when in the field, a campaign which in success and magnitude surpassed all that he had done before. The kings of the East felt the force of his arms, marvelled that he could not be bribed, and extolled his clemency; wealth and power poured in upon him; he became simply the most important person in the Roman world.

One day during Pompey's five years' administration of Asia a party on horseback, following the road beside the river, emerged from the richly wooded gorge and began to cross the plain towards Antioch. The vines were in tender leaf along the lower slopes of the mountains, the broad river shone green in the strong sunlight, the colonnades and porticos of Antioch rose white and stately ahead.

Yes, thought Sarpedon, who rode on a mule behind his young master, the view was certainly fine ; but the day was hot and the dust thick, and the old man sighed, and wished they were all well settled in some cool comfortable court in the city. It would be several hours, he knew, before this could be accomplished. His young master's austere notion of travel was no doubt admirable in its Stoic integrity, reflected Sarpedon, but to an old man like himself a little tiring. Cato thought it wrong to demand hospitality from the provincials, whose customs he was now studying to fit himself for state affairs, and he would not allow application for entertainment to be made to a city's magistrates, as was the custom of most travelling Romans of good birth, unless no other accommodation were available. As a result, one often had to stand about, or sit talking philosophy to Cato on a piece of baggage, for an hour or two after one's arrival anywhere, while slaves rushed about in a panic trying to find accommodation at an inn. Cato was a rather trying travelling companion in other ways, at present ; the rich food, the lavish wine, the exotic dancing girls, even the very climate, of this hot teeming East, seemed to cross the grain of his nature and make his rough temper rougher, while the elaborate ceremonies dear to Asiatic hearts he simply abhorred. As they drew near the city now, the old Greek saw with real regret that his master's temper was about to experience one of these trials ; evidently news of his coming had preceded him, and a formal welcome had been prepared.

"O, dear ! O, dear !" murmured the old man, surveying with dismay the groups of young men in white cloaks, the

children holding bunches of flowers, the priests wearing garlands, clustered about the city gate: "Cato *will* be vexed."

The thought had hardly crossed his mind before Cato, catching sight of the festive group, reined in his horse with a scowl of displeasure.

"Who has disobeyed my orders and sent news of my coming in advance?" he demanded angrily in his grating tones.

As neither friend nor attendant spoke, Cato began to rail against the slaves he had sent on before him for thus revealing his identity; then suddenly swung from his horse to the ground. "We will enter on foot," he announced disagreeably.

Sarpedon sighed again; why be so lacking in suavity, why spoil the citizens' innocent pleasure thus?

The party walked on in silence—all save Cato feeling rather ridiculous as they did so—towards the gate. At their approach the festively attired citizens began to arrange themselves in lines beside the road—but not, as Sarpedon noticed with surprise, as though they were in any particular hurry about it. An elderly man, who seemed to be in charge of the ceremonies, since he carried a wand of office and wore a garland, now came forward; to Sarpedon's horror he stepped straight up to Cato and addressed him in a familiar tone.

"Is Demetrius far behind you?" he said. "Shall we have long to wait for him?"

"Demetrius!" exclaimed Cato, amid the titters of his retinue. Utterly taken aback, he repeated: "Demetrius!"

"Yes—we've got this little reception ready for him," explained the man. "Some of the notabilities of Antioch will be out presently to meet him—I'm to give them warning of his approach. Had I better tell them now?"

At this, Cato's friends could no longer contain themselves, and their laughter swelled into a hearty roar. Even Cato

himself could not forbear a sardonic smile, but his high colour deepened to an angry crimson and his yellow eyes were fiery. "I know nothing of Pompey's freedman, friend," he said harshly, and pushed past.

The party continued to laugh through the streets of Antioch, so that people turned to look after them curiously; Cato himself, however, stalked on in brooding silence, his heavy lip drooping, his head down. After a while the rest fell silent, ashamed of their mirth since Cato took the matter so seriously; and then at last the young Stoic spoke.

"Unfortunate city!" he said.

There was a pause to digest this, then Cato's friend, Favonius, who prided himself on imitating Cato's austerity but usually only aped his awkwardness, demanded: "Which city do you mean, Marcus Porcius, Antioch or Rome?"

Cato glared at him in silence, furious at being thought to have coupled such an inauspicious epithet with the name of the Republic, but both he and the rest were struck by the same thought:

"He has hit upon a truth there. Too fortunate Pompey, unfortunate Rome!"

ANOTHER WAY TO POWER

AT THAT MOMENT in Rome Caesar, having stayed on beyond the hour for formal calls in Pompey's beak-decorated house, was murmuring a delicately improper suggestion in the ear of Pompey's wife.

"But what would Pompey say?" objected Mucia, pouting.

"Pompey is in Asia," murmured Caesar persuasively.

Excited by his nearness, Mucia laughed nervously, and turned up her bright black eyes to him in an arch look of challenge. Caesar, who had been amusing himself for some months by angling for her surrender, kissed her small mouth promptly.

"All these pretty women taste the same!" he thought at once with amusement. "It is an agreeable taste, however, if not indulged too frequently."

As he was expecting a message any moment to summon him to his duties as commissioner of the Appian Way, there was no danger of an excess of kisses this morning, and he might as well make the best of his time. He therefore continued to make love to Pompey's wife with his usual urbane charm, toying with her bronze plaits and gaining a certain amusement from the response of her dimples to his less intelligent jokes, though he glanced once or twice at the water-clock on the wall, from the sheer tedium of her conversation. He had just made an appointment with her of which Pompey would certainly disapprove if he knew, for it was an appointment in which conversation would certainly be at its minimum, and had promised her a bracelet

with blue stones she had seen in one of the Sacred Way shops, as a bribe to keep it, when the expected message arrived, and he rose to go. Mucia pouted again, and said that it was not polite of him to leave her society for dust and tombs.

"The good of the Republic demands it," replied Caesar with an official air, nevertheless smiling down at her. "I am an aedile of the City this year, as you know, and all these matters are in my care. It is the duty of an aedile," he went on with pretended pomposity, quoting the law, "to superintend the streets, temples and public buildings of Rome, to arrange the water supply, to provide public games for the celebration of religious festivals by the people——"

"The Via Appia is outside the City," objected Mucia.

"True—that is an extra appointment entrusted to me by the Senate and people of Rome," agreed Caesar, amused by her shrewdness but maintaining his sententious tone, for he meant to leave at once.

"I don't understand you, Caius Caesar," said Mucia, pettishly. "My husband says those things seriously, but you always seem to laugh."

"I take my duties as seriously as he does, nevertheless," replied Caesar.

The sudden chill in his tone frightened Mucia, and she hastened to speak ingratiatingly, laying her fingers on his arm. "With you as aedile, we shall certainly expect some magnificent games this year," she said.

"I will do my best to satisfy your expectations," said Caesar, smiling. "I am sending to Cilicia for a new kind of panther—but that is a secret as yet."

Mucia's eyes sparkled. "Till to-morrow, then," she said.

"Till to-morrow," agreed Caesar, throwing a world of significance into his tone.

He sighed with relief as he left the house, and making his way at once to the City gate, where a carriage and attendants awaited him, had himself driven southwards. The Via

Appia was thronged just outside the City and his progress was therefore slow; the freshness of morning was over and the full heat of noon at hand before he reached the point where the contractor was repairing the road. The man himself was busy, he saw, at one side, instructing some slaves who were measuring and chiselling a heap of the white paving stones; Caesar passed him and stood watching the main operations. An alarming subsidence had occurred along some two hundred paces of the road; the surface had now been torn up, and the contractor was digging down, to discover the cause of the collapse. Within the resulting ditch slaves were working; they filled baskets with the yellow sticky soil, which were then attached to a hook and a rope and drawn up to the ground-level by other men, Romans, balanced astride on a pair of planks. Another free man, a fine strong lad, very much tanned by the sun, then hoisted the basket to his shoulder, and staggering down the plank, emptied it on a growing mound to the side. Caesar noticed how his body glistened with sweat, his muscles swelled and his chest heaved, as he lifted the basket; "that earth is heavy," he thought sympathetically. The rags of all the workers were thick in yellow mud, and mud oozed on the young lad's neck from the shouldered basket. Caesar glanced down into the hole at his feet; its sides slid and quaked, and the bottom held inches of foul yellow slime. "It is heavy because it is full of water," judged Caesar. At this moment the contractor came up in a flutter; he was quite unused to patricians who actually inspected the work for which they were responsible on the spot, in such heat too! He babbled in alarm about the sun and Caesar's noble head; Caesar cut him short impatiently.

"What is this about not being able to repair the road satisfactorily at the contract price?" he demanded in a cold severe tone.

The contractor threw out his hands despairingly. "Illustrious sir," he began with the emphasis of a man irritated

by repeated explanation almost beyond control: "You can see for yourself that there is marsh below which needs to be drained. You can see for yourself," he repeated, though not as if he believed an aedile capable of seeing anything so earthily obvious. "We can drive in piles and make shift that way," he continued, "but that will not last. The land should be drained."

"Drain it then," drawled Caesar. He adjusted his toga, turned his back and walked towards his carriage.

The contractor gaped after him. "But, sir!" he began in a perplexed tone. Caesar signalled to his driver, and the horses' hoofs danced on the causeway as they turned. "Sir," cried the contractor more strongly, running: "Is this to be put to the public account? Will the treasury pay?"

"No. I shall pay," replied Caesar smoothly, seating himself. As the fellow still gaped at him, he continued with an affable smile: "There is nothing secret or strange in the matter. As aedile, I am glad to do this for the good of the Republic."

"You are very liberal, sir," said the contractor in a tone of awe.

"I am liberal when I am not cheated," remarked Caesar with significance. "Take this," he added, holding out a gold piece, "and see those fellows of yours have something to drink." He signalled again to his driver, and the carriage flew away. Glancing back over his shoulder presently, he saw the contractor and all his men collected in a group, staring after him, quite numbstruck with admiration. He smiled, content.

The fiery little horses rattled along the white road towards Rome. The larks rose up out of the green plain, singing, the distant mountains shimmered pink against the azure sky, the tips of the cypresses curved gracefully in the gentle breeze; Caesar gave the scene a glance of pleasure, then began to dictate to Philemon briskly. He sent letters to Cilicia about the panthers, to a man on Pompey's staff whom he could

trust, to another serving in Gaul, for the latest news; to Aurelia who was by the sea with Caesar's wife and daughter; a note for Mucia to go with the bracelet, and half a dozen dinner invitations. These minor matters disposed of, he dictated a letter of congratulation to Marcus Tullius Cicero on the birth of his son, smiling ironically to himself over his own urbane phrases as he did so. It amused Caesar that he, a member of a patrician family which claimed descent from the goddess Venus herself, should be writing congratulatory epistles to a man of mere equestrian birth, a "new man," none of whose ancestors had attained a curule magistracy, a man born in a country town, a man whose patrician wife, the sharp-featured Terentia, report said, despised and nagged him. But then Cicero had a great, a striking, talent; and Caesar delighted to see talent employed; indeed it was the great accusation of his party against the Senate that it wasted talent, employing numbskulls of good birth in preference to clever men, and sending men of ability to the wrong place with a lofty indifference to such details as their natural disposition. That all careers should be open to talent, and to talent alone, was therefore not only Caesar's personal but his political conviction. But then, Cicero was his political opponent, being a devoted adherent of the Optimates, the "best men," as he loved to call the Senatorial party. Was he so devoted, however, as not to like a letter from a fashionable and prominent member of the other side, of real patrician birth? Caesar, his tongue in his cheek, rather thought he was not. Cicero irritated Caesar in much the same way as Pompey did; they each had that incapacity to look below the surface or beyond the nose, that rather ingenuous temperamental which always quite genuinely finds the course most to its advantage the most honest and is surprised and grieved if others do not see it so, the success of which in winning public favour was a most unpalatable commentary on Caesar's own abilities. That Pompey was Rome's Great General, and Cicero a step higher in official

rank, a step nearer the coveted consulship, than Caesar, seemed at times almost intolerably galling. Still, there was Cicero's eloquence, his sublime and glowing tongue; impossible not to admire a man who spoke like that ! All these thoughts flew through Caesar's mind as he dictated, and he reflected that they were probably contradictory because the man himself was so; even Cicero's one political idea, the reconciliation of the best men in all ranks in the interests of the Republic, was a compromise, a muddle of conflicting elements. With Cicero one must, and could, manœuvre without committing oneself. The letter came out on those lines: affable yet not effusive, cool yet friendly, with a neat compliment to the orator's latest speech, at the end. Caesar was pleased with it, when Philemon read it over.

Philemon then reported a message from the trainer who had Caesar's gladiators in hand, stating that the five new ones recently arrived from Spain were of uneven height. Caesar frowned, and asked sharply for the earlier correspondence on the subject; Philemon, admirable secretary that he was, had brought it with him and produced it at once, and Caesar glanced it through. "Well ! I will see for myself," he decided.

By this time they had reached the City gate. Dismounting from the carriage, Caesar made his way on foot to the gladiators' barracks.

The afternoon was now cooler, and the men, having bathed, were at ball in the court. The trainer lined them up promptly, and it became clear that he was right about the men from Spain; three of them were decidedly smaller than the rest. Caesar frowned as he watched them march, and the trainer, eyeing him furtively, growled in a voice hoarse from shouting commands:

"'Tisn't usually thought necessary to have 'em all the same height."

"But my games will not be usual," said Caesar coldly.

"No, sir," agreed the trainer, but his voice held no zeal. As they left the open court, he enquired gruffly: "Was you thinking of increasing again, sir? We've upwards of three hundred couple now."

"I thought I had told you already that I want five hundred pairs," stated Caesar sharply. "All the same height, all skilled fighters, all with silver arms."

"Yes," said the trainer, "I remember you saying that." But he still sounded flat and doubtful, and presently, having pulled at his scarred ear and spat aside, to relieve his embarrassment, he remarked with a diffident air: "If I could be having something on account, sir? It's some time since you sent me anything, and they eat such a lot, you know."

"You shall have a banker's draft to-morrow," said Caesar indifferently.

At once the trainer brightened, and began to discuss some new exercises for the arena in an enthusiastic tone.

Caesar gave him a word of praise—for the Spanish error was not his fault—and left the building. Quite a little crowd, he observed with pleasure, had gathered outside the barracks to see him pass. They were mostly shock-haired women with their brats, for this was not a very well-thought-of quarter; Caesar eyed their rags with a kind of rage that Romans should go so clad, asked some of the children's ailments and their names, and made a note on his tablets to send his doctor to them. He then hurried homewards, finding time however to buy Mucia's bracelet on the way. He bathed and changed; returned to the Forum just as the courts broke up, managed to be passing when Crassus, who as usual was engaged there on some petty defendant's case, came out with his lictors, and accompanied him home. Crassus, pleased by this attention from the elegant young rake, asked him in, whereupon Caesar begged for a few minutes' private conversation. At this Crassus' face at once lost its friendly air, and resumed its usual inscrutable mask

of discretion. He inclined his head courteously, however, ushered his guest into a small poorly decorated room, and when they were seated, bade the slaves retire and close the doors.

"And what can I do for you, Caius Caesar?" he began, smiling his stiff unmeaning smile. "Pray tell me if there is anything in my power that you require."

"I want what you are doubtless tired of hearing men ask for," said Caesar quietly. "Money."

Crassus silently lowered his head so that the broad bald dome with its greasy fringe was all Caesar's view of him, and fixed his eyes on Caesar's shoes. "What security can you offer?" he enquired at last flatly.

"In a few years I shall be consul," drawled Caesar: "the year after that, I shall have a province. Then all I owe you will be repaid."

"You may not succeed in becoming consul," remarked Crassus in his expressionless tone. "The consuls are elected by the Roman people. You are not even praetor yet."

"If you lend me this money, I shall be elected," said Caesar.

"H'm," said Crassus, and looked at Caesar's shoes again intently. Caesar neither moved nor spoke, and the silence lasted quite a long time. At length, without lifting his eyes, Crassus observed, still in the flat tones he affected: "I can find many safer and more profitable ways of investing my money."

"Can you?" said Caesar in a significant tone.

For the first time Crassus looked at his guest directly. His bright beady eyes asked the question his tongue forebore, and Caesar answered it in his own way.

"When Pompey returns from the East," he remarked, dropping the words casually and coolly on the air, "you wish there to be no obstacle to his ascendancy? No one to balance him in power?"

Crassus' eyes fell again, and his hands sought their

familiar position, one finger in the other palm. He seemed to consider, and then :

"How much do you require?" he asked.

Caesar laughed. "I need thirteen hundred talents to own nothing," he replied cheerfully, and observed with delighted amusement that the amount of his debts had actually startled the richest man in Rome.

There was another pause.

"Listen, Caius Caesar," said Crassus presently with brutal candour: "I know the ways of young men who want to borrow money. Always, when the debts are paid, they discover just one more. You have told me now what you owe; very well; now go home; to-morrow you shall come again and tell me that you had forgotten, there are other debts, this is the sum; in four more days you shall come and tell me again that you had forgotten, and there is so much more. In that way I shall perhaps learn the true total, and then we will talk of whether I shall pay it." He made as if to rise in dismissal.

"For whom or what do you take me?" said Caesar calmly, without moving. "I may be a fool, but I am not the ordinary kind of fool. I ask you now for fifteen hundred talents, no less and no more."

Crassus was silent. After a while he almost imperceptibly shook his head.

"If you were a lesser man I should hint a sarcastic apology for straining your resources beyond their power," said Caesar thoughtfully. "But neither are you the ordinary kind of fool, Marcus Crassus, so I refrain."

Crassus gave him a curious look from his bright black eyes. "What are you trying to buy with all that money?" he suddenly enquired.

Caesar started forward and exclaimed with passion: "Rome!"

"I should want a share in that," said Crassus, coldly sniffing.

"But that is what I am offering you!" exclaimed Caesar.

"You are very sure of your good fortune, young man," said Crassus.

Caesar shrugged his shoulders and smiled, and there was another pause.

"Well—how will you have the money?" said Crassus suddenly.

"As you like," replied Caesar, externally calm, though his spirit leaped: "But now."

"You won't pay your debts with it, you know; you'll spend it all on something fresh," observed Crassus with a mournful air. "You young men in debt—I know you!" He glanced at Caesar as if expecting protestations, but Caesar made him none; looking him full in the eye instead, boldly. Suddenly Crassus gave a little snort of mirth, Caesar followed with a ringing peal, and the two men laughed together heartily.

When Caesar presently left the house, he felt that a long time had passed since he entered it; but in point of fact he still had time to spare before his dinner guests were due, and, as often with this cool evening hour, he decided to spend it with Servilia. He walked accordingly to the house of Silanus.

Servilia, the slaves told him, was busy with her daughters, but would be free to welcome him in a moment; an accustomed guest, he was shown without formality to the peristyle. It was summer by the faulty Roman calendar, but spring by the season of the year; the sun was already descending to the glowing west, and the clear evening light patterned the marble pavement of the colonnade with alternate luminous stripes and oblique shadows from the pillars. In one of these shadows sat young Brutus, deep in a book, the portion he had read curling thickly about his ankles. At Caesar's entrance he started up, blushing. He was rather young for his seventeen years and blushed rather often; a sensitive and reserved boy of whom nevertheless Caesar was deeply fond.

He recognised in the lad the same abstract nobility he saw in Servilia; it was not a quality he owned himself, nor did he desire it, for he thought it unpractical and unsuited to modern life, but he recognised its unworldly charm. As he returned Brutus' greeting now and saw again the pure and gentle lines of his oval face, the thick dark hair, somewhat tumbled, the wide dreaming eyes, the blood beating drowsily beneath the smooth young skin, the rich lips slightly pouting in the tension of thought, he felt a real love for the boy.

"What is the book? May I know?" he asked politely. His even courtesy, which always admitted the right of his interlocutor to have private and important business as well as he, was very soothing to the young, and Brutus' brooding look lightened now as he replied in his low shy tones that it was *Phaedo*, Plato's dialogue on the soul.

"It would be better to read in the light, for the sake of your eyes," suggested Caesar mildly.

Brutus, holding his head down so that his thick lashes swept his cheek, murmured, stammering a little, that there had been light where he sat when he began to read. He obediently moved, however, but out of sheer shyness put himself away in a corner which the sun's rays scarcely reached, and unrolled his book again. Caesar smiled at this but said nothing, for which the boy was grateful.

In a few moments Servilia came out to them. It gave her a deep pleasure to see the two she loved best in the world sitting thus together, quiet and at ease, and her face showed her happiness as she greeted Caesar. She seated herself midway between them, and a tranquil silence followed. A delicate feather of rosy cloud glided slowly across the turquoise sky; the eyes of all three rested on it, and they felt at peace.

"You look tired, Caius Julius. What have you done to-day?" asked Servilia presently in her pure grave tones.

Caesar told her, omitting—out of mere decorum for the boy's sake, however, for he concealed nothing from her, she

knew all his debts, his schemes, his intrigues, and was gravely silent about all—his morning's flirtation with Mucia. Servilia listened with eager attention when he spoke of the Appian Way, but her face fell at the details of his correspondence, and clouded more and more as he continued his recital.

"Why do you busy yourself with panthers and gladiators, Caius?" she murmured with distaste. "They are beneath your attention, surely."

"Even when they wear silver collars and make me praetor?" teased her lover with a smile.

"The more so then!" flashed Servilia.

"Great ends have to be achieved by small means," contended Caesar cheerfully.

"Plato takes a different view," murmured Brutus suddenly behind them.

Both Caesar and Servilia were surprised to hear him thus enter his elders' conversation, but they were pleased too, and they turned to him with expectant smiles. But under their gaze the hot blood dyed the boy's cheek again, and he began to roll up his book nervously with his long fingers.

"I'll go and see my sister before my uncle comes to fetch me home," he murmured into the scroll.

"Yes, go to Tertia—you will find Cassius and your brother and Junia with her," said his mother.

Brutus, who had brightened at the name of his friend, grew sombre again at the mention of his half-brother and sister, the children of Servilia and her second husband. In his secret heart he was profoundly jealous of the place of these two in his mother's affections; and though his noble nature forbade him to vent his feeling on the children themselves—he was always indeed particularly kind to them—a deep uneasiness tinged all their relations. Especially between Brutus and his lively careless half-brother was there discomfort; it was well for both of them that Brutus spent most of his time with his legal guardian, Cato. His mother sighed now as she saw the

shadow cloud his face. Brutus approached her to say farewell; Servilia took his face between her hands and kissed his forehead, smooth, white and warm as her own.

"Farewell, my son," she said.

The boy took a shy but affectionate leave of Caesar, and went indoors. The lovers sat together for a little, quietly happy, till the glowing sky began to darken and the evening star appeared. Then a chill air crept about the pillars, and Caesar stood up, saying: "If your brother is coming, I had better leave."

"He told me yesterday that there is some talk of a proposal in the Senate to limit the number of gladiators anyone may bring to Rome," said Servilia, rising. "I had no idea then that it was directed against you, Caius."

"Well, it will save my purse if it spoils my show," said Caesar with cheerful philosophy. "I must go—I have Catiline and many of his friends to dine with me."

"Catiline is a vile ruffian," said Servilia, a noble anger in her tone. "Why make him your guest, Caius?"

"Another conspiracy he wishes to broach to me, I believe," replied Caesar with a smile. "Conspiracies proceed by dinner parties; that is the custom."

"O, conspiracies! The air of Rome seems to breed them, I think," said Servilia.

"It is the misgovernment of the Senate which breeds them," said Caesar. "But I shall not share in this one, so do not trouble yourself."

"You will never share a conspiracy you do not lead, Caius," murmured Servilia, sombre.

"How well you know me, my dear!" said Caesar with affectionate amusement.

Servilia was silent, and her long lashes veiled her eyes.

As Caesar crossed the Forum, now emptying in the twilight, some idlers still lounging on the temple steps recognised him and gave him quite a rousing welcome, so that others ran up to see who passed, and he was followed homeward

by an increasing crowd. The matter of the Appian Way had spread to Rome, it seemed, and his visit to the gladiators had also been noted and gossiped over. "How many combats are you going to show us, Caesar?" cried a voice. "Five hundred if the Senate allows," cried Caesar in reply. The crowd's shout of gratification was followed by a groan as he added quickly: "Three hundred if they don't."

Both shout and groan pleased Caesar—not that popular applause gratified his ears, but because his every action was directed to making the people love him and hate the Optimates; an overpowering political combination which would enable him to change the government of Rome was his incessant aim.

He changed hurriedly into a flowered silk tunic to receive his guests. It was certainly strange, he thought, and part of the turmoil of modern Roman politics, that he should be receiving Lucius Catiline as the chief of these. For Catiline had taken quite a prominent part in the Sullan proscription; there was an ugly story current that after killing a man and offering his head to Sulla he had washed his hands in the Sacred Fountain in the Forum, while another version said that Cato, then quite a child, had met him at Sulla's door swinging the blood-stained head. Caesar cared remarkably little about the Sacred Fount, but did not view with the same indifference the fact that the blood-stained head in question might have been his own. Catiline nowadays was quite a fervent member of the party he then persecuted. Caesar himself had never changed his party, he knew his mind too well; and though it was not in his nature to despise men who sought their own advantage at the expense of consistency, he made no mistake about the value of such men's support. Catiline was a desperate scoundrel, over his ears in debt; the murderer, it was said, of his own son for the sake of a woman; he couldn't even pretend respectability with any success, thought Caesar, greeting him now urbanely, but always looked the ruffian he was, with his sinister sword scar and the

fringe of heavy dark hair overhanging his low forehead. But he was an acknowledged member of the Populars, and commanded a certain following—of the usual type to be found in such conspiracies, thought Caesar, remembering Lepidus: middle-aged rakes whose debts made revolution attractive, and young men who thought it clever to be shameless. In this latter group Caesar observed young Clodius, perfumed and elegant, with his red hair waved, leaning on the shoulder of a still younger lad, a distant relative of Caesar's, Marcus Antonius, his very particular friend. This young Antony was a handsome fellow, strong and thickset, with bright eyes and very curly hair; it's a pity they can't find something better to do than engage in conspiracies, thought Caesar, welcoming the pair heartily. ("A small group . . . some of us who find the present constitution unworkable . . . has Caesar invited you to dine," he thought distastefully.) However, there they all were, Catiline's following; they all had votes; their association gave them importance; they must be managed, kept friendly, kept in hand. Caesar turned himself to the task with his customary efficiency.

Catiline liked strong wine and disreputable women, so his host had provided both on a lavish and even splendid scale. He had hired a score of Flora's best and youngest girls for the occasion; he always contrived to pay Flora promptly, and she never disappointed him; to-night she had excelled herself—the girls were really pretty, expert dancers, and charmingly dressed; they obeyed their instructions, too, and did not begin to shed their clothes and become riotous too soon. Caesar began by telling obscene stories, with the point made very plain to accommodate the intelligence of Catiline and his friends, and listened with every sign of appreciation to those told in reply; in this way he turned the secrets of the proposed conspiracy inside out with a deft hand. There was a certain brutal obstinacy in Catiline which might make him dangerous, reflected Caesar, but that was counterbalanced

by his stupidity—he had already ruined one conspiracy this year by giving the signal for the massacre too soon—and his lack of armed resources. Besides, what use was a conspiracy? Massacre and mess! Caesar therefore put into his guests' heads the idea of delay, of waiting till the time was ripe; Catiline might yet succeed in gaining the consulship next year in opposition to Cicero; till that had been tried and failed it would be a mistake to proceed to extremes. By hinting to them that this was the advice of Crassus, who might come in and support them with his vast wealth later if they abstained now, he secured the postponement he desired.

As soon as this point was settled, he gave Flora—who was present herself, fat and raddled but jolly in a bright green dress—a private sign, and the girls at once began to grow very lively. The wine flowed; one of the girls danced on the table naked—as usual, thought Caesar, stifling a yawn; really these Bacchanalian dinners are very monotonous—and was joined in this performance by Antony; everyone laughed, bellowed, drank to the vomiting point, and agreed that Caesar was an admirable host.

It was long after midnight when his guests left Caesar, but by dawn he was up, ready to receive visits of ceremony and attend to business, calm, cheerful, indefatigably urbane. Yesterday, he felt, had been a good day; he had taken several steps along his chosen road to power.

Days of that kind followed days. Caesar put the whole long stretch of the Appian Way, from Rome to the southern port of Brundisium, in excellent order, and brought from Greece quantities of magnificent statues and vases, which he displayed to the people in specially constructed platforms on the Capitoline hill. (In this he was not unmindful, either of Servilia's strictures on the vulgarity of panthers—as to which he often teased her—or of the pleasure these superb works of art would give her son. Cato of course declined to visit such

contemptible mummery at all.) Caesar never rebuffed any man who sought his influence or aid in law, and his advice was much sought, for it was so astute as to be almost always successful. The games he exhibited were such as had never been seen the like of in Rome before; the panthers excelled all others in grace and ferocity, and three hundred and twenty pairs of gladiators, all a height, flashed their silver armour in the dazzled eyes of Rome. Cicero, who, though he had already begun his canvass for the consulship and was therefore affably disposed to most men of influence, yet detested Caesar as the focus of all the elements of disturbance in the State, told him sharply one day in the Senate that Bibulus, his colleague in the aedileship, had compared the aediles this year to the temple of Castor in the Forum. Caesar at once saw the joke, but asked: "Why?" in order that the orator might have the pleasure of relating it.

"The temple of Castor and Pollux is dedicated to both those divine brothers, but generally named by the people as though belonging to only one," said Cicero, "and so with the aediles this year: both pay, but only one gets the credit."

There was a general laugh at this, but Caesar was far from displeased by such evidence of his popularity. He saw how to turn the tables neatly on his opponent, moreover. "Did Bibulus indeed say that?" he queried with an air of doubt. "I should have judged only one pair of lips in Rome could frame a joke with such wit and eloquence."

Cicero, who had indeed, as Caesar guessed, invented the saying himself, looked confused but not displeased, and Caesar's prestige was by no means diminished by the incident.

In such manœuvres passed two more years, by the end of which Caesar had wholly won the hearts of the Roman people. Or so at least he hoped; and he determined to put it to the test, and submit himself as candidate for election to the post of Pontifex Maximus, the official head of the religion of Rome. It was a fine appointment, made for life, conferring

large powers and privileges upon its holder, without whose consent—for he alone could administer the religious ceremonies necessary to make public assemblies legal—no public business could be transacted. It carried, too, a house on the Sacred Way at the lower end of the Forum; Caesar's fortune would indeed be favourable if he could but be elected. The affair was a trial of strength between the parties, for Caesar's opponents were respected and venerable members of the Optimates; a success for Caesar would be a great blow to the Senate, a failure correspondingly dangerous to himself.

As he stood in his atrium on the morning of the election, ready to go forth to the contest, the members of his household came to wish him luck. His young feather-headed wife, Pompey's cousin, who was scarcely older than his daughter Julia and stood in an awe of him which Caesar tried with amusement but ill success to dissipate, seeing him look pale and stern, was overcome by the magnitude of the occasion and began to sob, whereupon Julia's lovely lips also began to quiver and her beautiful blue eyes to fill with tears. She rushed towards her father to throw herself on his breast, but remembering at the last moment that she must not disarrange or mar the whitened toga which marked him as a candidate, seized his hand instead between her own, and stood gazing up at him with a delicious look of love. Caesar laid his right hand on her brilliant chestnut curls, while his friends and attendants murmured a little, not sure whether the omen was good or no. Aurelia gently withdrew the excited girl, and standing erect and firm, said in a loud clear tone:

"May it turn out well, my son; may you return to me as Pontifex this day."

"Mother," replied Caesar: "I shall return either thus or not at all." He added quietly: "It is time." His retinue thought that he gave the signal for departure, and began to move; but Aurelia understood his deeper meaning.

The panthers, the gladiators, the statues, the feasts, the

law-cases—all the bribes, in fact, with which Caesar had so skilfully fed the people for the past twelve years—together with something in his air, his way of speech, his neatly successful conduct of affairs: all these did not fail of their effect. Next morning the house in the Suburra was crowded with visitors paying calls of congratulation, for Caius Julius Caesar had been duly elected Pontifex Maximus of Rome. The bay crowning the images of the Julian ancestors in his atrium in honour of this success had scarcely faded before it was renewed for a second celebration; he was elected praetor, the penultimate office in the government of Rome; in two years' time he would be eligible to stand for the consulship, the supreme goal of all Roman ambition.

“NOW IS THE TIME FOR
ALL GOOD MEN . . .”

BUT HE WAS NOT TO ENJOY his honours peaceably.

Catiline did not gain the consulship he coveted, though Caesar backed him with his influence, and Crassus, in the hope of gaining a counterpoise against Pompey, with his wealth. The other Popular candidate, an insignificant person whose chief merit was that his crimes were a few less than Catiline's, secured election by winning a few votes more; but the man at the head of the poll, miles above them both, was Cicero.

This odd result, not altogether relished even by those who voted for him, was due to the Senatorial party's lack of any striking candidate to put forward, combined with their genuine alarm at the growth of their opponents' power; any plan, however distasteful, must be adopted which would keep the Popular party out of office. Yes, even if it involved voting for a "new man" of no birth and common connections, who was always lecturing them and making complicated jokes at which he laughed himself, whose conceit would be really intolerable if it wasn't so comic. Cicero was eloquent, affable, genial, and a slave for work, the Senatorial party urged each other; influential with the mob; honest too as that kind of man regarded honesty; not a soldier, not wealthy, and therefore very harmless; and really Catiline and his crew must be kept out at all costs. Reluctantly, with a good many private sneers and significant public glances, the Senatorial party pulled strings and found money and recorded their votes; all honest persons who surveyed the

three candidates had no difficulty in making their decision ; and Cicero was in.

Immediately Catiline, in a fury, began to conspire again ; and Caesar spent some highly exasperating months holding him in with one hand, while trying to squeeze some measures through the Senate which would diminish Pompey's power when he returned, to please Crassus, with the other. He was not successful in either attempt, and eventually had to abandon both. Catiline decided to try for the consulship again at the next election, but in anticipation of failure began his preparations for the conspiracy at once. The standard of revolt was to be raised in Etruria—Caesar groaned at these words ; it seemed to him he had heard nothing else for the past seventeen years, and he was wholly tired of them. His temper, usually so even, actually became ruffled and uncertain during these trying months, and in the Regia, his handsome official residence in the Forum, life was not comfortable. His wife sniffled in corners, and Julia said frankly : " Father, why are you so cross ? " He was so rude to his sister, who asked him mildly why he did not congratulate her on the birth of her grandson, that she complained to Aurelia ; Aurelia told him plainly that his manners were becoming abominable, but did not rebuke him on the subject of the baby Octavius, for she knew too well how sore a point it was with him that he had no son of his own. Preparations for the conspiracy went on ; Crassus sometimes thought how convenient it would be to have a tool of his own as consul when Pompey came home, and gave Catiline money, and sometimes remembered that Catiline's programme included the abolition of debts, and shook his head ; Catiline laid savage plans for fire and sword ; Caesar, who disliked Catiline increasingly as a bloodthirsty, brutal and stupid villain, tried to steer his course so as to be clear of the conspiracy if it failed and rule it if it succeeded, and found the process difficult. Servilia's husband was standing for the consulship in opposition to Catiline, being a devoted (if dull)

adherent of the Senatorial party; the whole subject had therefore in mere discretion to be dropped between the lovers, and this did not add to Caesar's good temper. He even spoke to Servilia at times with wounding sarcasm, but seeing one day on her dark lashes the tears she was too proud to shed, he felt ashamed, and returned to his usual manner of friendly courtesy towards her. The irritation thus suppressed mounted within, however.

Meanwhile Cicero was radiantly happy.

If it was the ambition of all Romans to hold the consulship, it was peculiarly that of Cicero, for he loved the forms of constitutional government with a lifelong passion. He loved the meetings of the Senate: the tiers of benches full of white-robed notabilities; the hum of chat before the commencement of the session; the solemn taking of the auspices, the stately entrance of the consuls; the opening of the day's business with matters of religion and those concerning the general safety of the Republic he loved so well; the forms of procedure, admirably adapted to human needs, though so old and a little quaint. No man knew his history better than Cicero, none could quote precedents so instantly, with such accuracy and relevance. He loved the feeling of the debate, how opinion swayed this way and that as senators in their speeches put different points of view. He loved presiding, calling upon the senators in turn to speak; he loved summing up the various resolutions, disentangling them, putting them to the vote in logical sequence, so that the stupidest patrician, the least experienced tribune, was in no doubt as to what he was voting for and what the result of his vote would be. He loved the gradual emergence, from a welter of apparently contradictory motions, of a common policy on which all could agree; no one was ever quicker than Cicero to see the essential factors which could form that policy, none could explain them to the Senate as well as he. He loved the old formulae: the *Whereas it has been reported that so-and-so, therefore the Senate decrees . . .* He loved returning home feeling

that a really sensible decision had been taken, and taken with his aid, on a matter important to the great destiny of great Rome; he glowed all over, he beamed with happiness, when his name was written at the bottom of an important bill.

He loved, too, naturally enough, his own skill and power in civil government. His earlier reediness of physique and voice had disappeared now that he was in his prime; he now had a strong firm body and a large genial face, with the massive throat, the speaking eye, the pliant lips of the professional orator. He loved his dignified presence, his flexible and resonant voice, the glorious flow of his superbly rhythmic Latin, its clarity, its force, its ease. When he made a speech his irritations were all forgotten—O, he had plenty! A nagging wife, jealous of his daughter, his beloved Tullia; a tiresome brother who quarrelled constantly with *his* wife and thus constantly threatened Cicero's relations with her brother, Atticus the banker, his best friend; a delicate peevish little son; endless money troubles. Sometimes indeed he felt that if he had not Atticus to talk and write to—Atticus so sensible, so calm, so full of good advice, so remote from party strife—he would never manage to surmount his family difficulties and make a decent public appearance at all. Atticus was so firmly non-patrician, too, so completely a cultured banker of equestrian birth and proud of it—it was a great relief. For this was another of Cicero's worries: the fact that he was a new man, on whom the old senatorial families looked down. O, he knew all about that; *he* had no images of his ancestors in his atrium, for none had reached a curule office—his little son would have his father's there one day however; Cicero's heart swelled with pride at the thought. He knew how the patricians looked down on him, sneered at him, laughed at him, asked him to their large public dinners only, mimicked his turns of speech—the very men whom he had defended in the courts, the men whose party he was saving now; they

jeered at him. Let them wait, however; let them wait! He would show them what a despised new man could do! He would unite all the best elements of all ranks in the Republic—the patricians, the equites (those men of solid birth and wealth, the backbone of the State, thought Cicero warmly), the small merchants, even freedmen—in one grand effort against all the elements of corruption and disintegration; he would set the Roman way of rule, which of late tottered and staggered so alarmingly, firmly on its feet again, so that Rome should be stately, noble, dignified, as of old.

"Now is the time for all good men to join together for the sake of the Republic!" thundered Cicero, and he delighted to give the party which resulted from this concord of all ranks, the title of Optimates, the Best Men of Rome.

Yes, Marcus Tullius Cicero, the new man from little Arpinum, Marcus Tullius Cicero, no general but an orator, *he* would save Rome! And how happy he was in doing so!

There were difficulties in plenty, indeed the constitution was threatened on all sides. By Pompey's dangerously great power—but somehow Cicero was not worried about Pompey; Pompey was decent and kind and not too clever, there was something homely and comfortable about him; Cicero felt that he could manage Pompey. Far more dangerous were the wealth of Crassus and the ability of that witty, unscrupulous, brilliant rake of a Popular, Caius Caesar. Cicero felt uneasy whenever he thought of Caesar. Caesar's jokes were too good, he was personally much too attractive—Cicero himself often wistfully felt attracted to him. He was too clever by half. "We haven't finished with him," reflected Cicero uneasily whenever the thought of Caesar crossed his mind: "It's not possible to tell what he will be up to next." Then there was Catiline. Cicero almost sighed with relief when he passed from Caesar to Catiline. Catiline's plans were concrete matters such as assassination, fire, revolt, and therefore one could counter them; but Caesar's

plans—the gods knew what they were ! However, perhaps he was worrying too much about Caesar ; other people seemed to take him much more lightly, and in any case the immediate problem was Catiline, who was certainly preparing something nefarious against the State.

On his wife's advice Cicero developed a network of paid spies about Catiline and his friends. Several of these spies were prostitutes, which annoyed Terentia greatly ; but when Cicero actually secured enough evidence of the plot to bring it before the Senate, and they took him so far seriously as to empower him to investigate it, she was impressed and withdrew her objections. Cicero for his part rather enjoyed meeting all these frail ladies ; to a man of such restrained and blameless life, their blandishments were refreshingly novel and stimulating, and it was fun to be called pet names and asked to pronounce on new perfumes. He spoke to them with an innocent fatherly kindness they all adored. There came a day when one of them, a girl of Flora's, ran up to him making big eyes, and told him the exact date when the conspiracy was to take place, with a whole list of places where fires were to be lighted in Rome and arms taken up in the country. Cicero stared at her, silent from sheer horrified amazement.

“ O—and you're to be assassinated at the election to-morrow,” concluded the pretty one cheerfully.

Next morning Cicero laid all this information before the Senate. The dates and places sounded so obviously accurate and authentic that the members were really staggered, and made no difficulty about passing the *consuls should make it their care* decree. Cicero, delighted, conducted the elections surrounded by an armed guard and wearing a highly polished breastplate beneath his toga, which he arranged in loose folds. He took care to let the sun flash on the metal, so that all might know its presence ; the hint was too obvious to be missed ; no one attempted his life, and Catiline again did not secure election.

Cicero, still further delighted, took active measures against the conspiracy outside the City, and a few days later he was justified in the eyes of Senate and people by the action of the conspirators themselves, who raised the standard of revolt in Etruria according to plan. Catiline himself, however, with a few other suspected leaders, remained in Rome, and no evidence could be secured against them sufficiently strong to justify a direct accusation. This was awkward; Cicero was sure he remained only to complete his plans, but could do nothing to prevent it; the consul ran about telling everybody that he had discovered this and that about the conspiracy, but he had really nothing to tell, and he began to lose ground in Forum and Senate.

Then one morning just before daylight there came an urgent knocking at his door, and the janitor let in a breathless lad with a message, this time from Flora herself, who had a liking for Cicero on account of his youthful speech in favour of Pompey. Cicero, ran the message, was to be assassinated at dawn by two conspirators, under pretence of the usual morning call—a midnight meeting at Catiline's house had arranged it. As the darkness was already thinning, the news came only just in time. Cicero, horrified but somehow flattered, ordered the household to be roused but then stood in the atrium telling the news over and talking excitedly, almost as if he were holding a reception; Tullia wept and trembled on her father's arm. It was Terentia who rushed out, her thin locks streaming, her sharp nose sharper than ever in this wan light, and in her arrogant patrician tones snapped out succinct orders for securing the doors. Hardly was this done when the sun came up over the Sabine hills, and the sound of feet was heard in the road. Peering cautiously out, the janitor saw the two men who had been mentioned by name coming up the hill, in the dress of ceremony proper to a call of respect on a consul. One looked back over his shoulder and beckoned, however; the movement revealed both a

strong dagger at his waist and a group of men of threatening aspect who were just not concealed round the corner. The conspirators knocked on the door and demanded admittance, politely at first but with increasing noisy anger when no notice was taken of their request. Some genuine morning callers, now arriving, gazed at them in such astonishment that they seemed suddenly to realise the ambiguity of their position, and made off. But Cicero did not receive that morning; the consul's doors remained closed. As his reception was usually thronged with guests, word of the outrage spread rapidly through Rome, and indignation filled every honest man's breast. By Hercules, it was too much ! Young men of good equestrian family, who were proud of the glory which the high position of Cicero reflected on their rank, rushed to make a guard for him; the most indolent of senators for once felt roused. Cicero summoned the Senate to meet next day in the temple of Jupiter Stator, which stood just below his house at the foot of the hill, so that he need not risk his person in the Forum, and surrounded both temple and road with armed guards.

He was cheered on the way, and the house was full, so Cicero was in the full tide of vigorous excitement when he rose to give an account of the latest audacity of the conspirators. Smiling, his wide eyes beaming, stroking his chin in the familiar gesture, he looked around to collect all eyes, then opened his mouth to begin to speak. At that moment Catiline himself, in his slouching uneven gait, his lock of black hair dripping over his seamed forehead, as usual, entered the temple and threw himself down on a front bench, smiling composedly his sinister smile. Utterly taken aback, Cicero stared at him for a moment in silence, while the startled Senate gaped; then all his anger against the man, his love for Rome, his resentment of this insolent treatment of his beloved Senate, flared up in his heart, and he shouted passionately;

"How long do you mean to abuse our patience, Catiline?"

As soon as he heard his own voice rolling out the syllables so strong and clear, another question which would balance the cadence flashed into his mind, and then another, and one again; and in a moment he was embarked upon the full tide of an oration, the sentences surging and rolling and flowing like the strong tumultuous sea. A hush fell on all the house, almost, it seemed, on all Rome; Cicero could see the temple steps gradually filling with soldiers and civilians, who pressed nearer and nearer, drawn by the spell of his eloquence as Ulysses by the sirens' song, though in a nobler cause. Gradually the bench on which Catiline sat emptied; the senators near him withdrew themselves, unobtrusively at first but presently without concealment. There was just one brief awkward moment, when the excited orator went beyond prudence in urging Catiline to banish himself voluntarily, saying that all Rome desired it.

"Consult the Senate, then!" shouted Catiline suddenly at this in his thick brutal tones: "Get them to pass a decree, and I'll obey."

Cicero looked round rapidly, but saw at once that such a course could not be followed—not, at least, by a man of such prudence as himself. There was not enough evidence against Catiline personally, and all the Popular party would vote against it—Caius Caesar there, for instance, was smiling that cool cynical smile of his which was so exasperating. And those sneering patricians—could they ever really be relied on to condemn one of themselves, whatever his political views? Swiftly the orator turned his phrase, made it appear that the very silence of the Senate was sufficient condemnation, slid away to less controversial grounds, began a defence of his own measures against the conspirators.

"For so long a time now, O conscript fathers, we have lived amongst these dangers and wiles of conspiracy," he cried, fixing a baleful eye on the smiling Caesar.

"No one is more tired of them than I, my dear Cicero, I assure you," reflected Caesar, smiling still. "But they are mere waves in a ladle, all the same; your eloquence is wasted on so small a theme."

But with this view Rome did not agree. When Cicero at length, in a tremendous period bidding Catiline depart and commending the City to the care of the immortal gods, made an end of speaking and sat down, applause thundered from the Senate and echoed among the crowd outside. Catiline rose and began to speak insultingly, but he was shouted down; with a last furious threat he padded from the house. The Senate crowded round Cicero, congratulating and praising; a smirk of satisfaction curved the orator's flexible lips, beamed from his wide grey eyes. He felt hot and exhausted, and breathed heavily; but what a triumph! "Nothing could have been warmer than the Senate's expressions of regard——" the sentence composed itself already, he saw it written in a letter, speeding across land and sea, perhaps to Pompey. The question whether he had been quite wise in urging Catiline so strongly to leave the City gave him an uneasy pang or two, but these were soon smothered in congratulations. The inscrutable Crassus, nay, Caius Caesar himself, dared not withhold their voice, but came up and added, Crassus a plain dull word, Caesar a neat and urbane compliment, to the general acclamation.

Catiline left Rome; the Senate commanded an assembly of the people to be convoked, and Cicero to address it in explanation of the whole conspiracy; from the Rostra in the Forum Cicero made one of the wittiest speeches in his career. As he came down, laughing and happy, his eye fell on Cato, who had stood near listening to him; Cato was scowling, and wore a look almost of contempt on his square high-coloured face. Cicero's pleasure was spoiled at once, as it always was if anybody disapproved of him; he maintained his smile, however, and without appearing to do so

swept nearer to the one dissentient in the shouting crowd. Pausing by Cato to adjust his toga—he loved a full sweeping toga, and had to exercise restraint over himself to keep within good taste in his folds—he remarked in his most genial tone:

"Did not my speech seem to you useful to the Republic, Marcus Cato?"

"One need not behave like a mountebank to be useful to the Republic," replied Cato disagreeably, turning away.

Cicero sighed; really Cato (who was now a tribune), with his Stoic austerity and his long scolding speeches and his fuss about wearing no tunic and eating no foreign dishes and never changing his mind, was something of a bore. He alienated people from sound constitutional principles by holding them in such a ridiculously rigid manner, reflected Cicero, who was never rigid about anything; they were not now living in the patriarchal times of Cato the Censor, and it was useless to pretend that they were. There was no sense of expediency in Cato, thought Cicero; he performed the right actions at the wrong times. At this present moment, for instance, he was instigating a prosecution against one of the newly elected consuls, for bribery, quite regardless of the fact that if it succeeded there would have to be another election, just when it was so important that there should be no opportunity in the City for rioting and disorder. Cicero determined now to undertake the defence in the case himself, and sentences in which he could laugh Cato's influence away began at once to bubble joyously in his brain.

He laughed it away so successfully, yet so affably, that the accused was acquitted, while even Cato's best friends bore little malice against Cicero for his attack—it was too amusing and too true. Servilia herself smiled as she spoke of it to Caesar, who was lounging somewhat moodily in her house on the evening of the day of the trial. Naturally interested

in the fate of her husband's colleague and her half-brother's accusation, she had attended the trial with a cousin who was a Vestal Virgin, and now spoke in high praise of Cicero's silver tongue. Caesar made no reply.

"Sometimes I wish, Caius," she continued diffidently, "that you and Marcus Cicero could join forces and save the State."

"Do you indeed?" said Caesar in a sarcastic and gloomy tone.

"His eloquence and your acuteness," went on Servilia, "might renew Rome."

"Do you really think that a man who defends someone accused of bribery simply because it would be inconvenient to have him convicted, and considers the act a good one, is capable of saving Rome?" demanded Caesar. "Marcus Tullius Cicero is drunk with his own glory."

"But if he truly thinks the accused innocent?" ventured Servilia.

"My dear child," said Caesar coldly: "There are times when your innocence of public affairs is positively nauseating."

"Then why do you come here?" flashed Servilia.

"Why indeed?" echoed Caesar gloomily.

"Indeed I sometimes wonder why," cried Servilia in sudden anguish, her calm breast panting. "If you treat Rome as you have treated me, Caius Caesar, the day of your birth was an inauspicious one for Rome. And when I speak thus you stare in surprise! O!" Tears filled her throat; gathering her stole hastily about her, she swept from the room.

Caesar, thus left alone, found himself unexpectedly humiliated—he was not used to be treated so by women. He tried to soothe his sore feeling by diminishing Servilia to himself, exclaiming upon the capacity of all women to call down thunder from a clear sky, laughing at her outburst as a tantrum of the usual feminine kind. But it was not

easy for him to think of Servilia thus; and indeed, if it were it did not flatter his own sense and taste to prove that he had given almost twenty years to loving a woman of an inferior kind. Servilia did not return to him, and he was too angry to send a message; he left the house with less than his customary ease of bearing, feeling thoroughly dejected and unquiet in mind.

It was too bad, he reflected, trying to ape the cynicism he would have felt with any other woman, it was too bad that his mistress should foist a quarrel on him just when he had this difficult Catiline affair on hand. The conspirators whom Catiline had left behind were now tampering with a tribe of Gauls through an embassy of theirs which chanced to be in Rome. Caesar emphatically declined to have anything further to do with the matter when he heard this—to bring Gauls on Rome, in order to put Catiline into power, made no appeal to him at all—and was distrusted by the conspirators, who after all were mostly his former friends of the Popular party, almost as much as by the Optimates, in consequence, so that they told him nothing of their plans. Then there was the tiresome behaviour of Crassus; he was in a highly nervous state of mind about his own entanglement with the conspiracy, and needed to be soothed each day. In vain did Caesar ask him just how far he was entangled, and what he had done to release himself; no sooner were these points mentioned than Crassus averted his beady eyes and became inscrutable. Altogether, Caesar felt as if he were trying to cross a quagmire in which there was somewhere an ambush, on a very dark night: a highly dangerous, obscure and complicated situation.

His alarm was justified, for the Gauls, as was to be expected, presently sold the conspirators to Cicero and helped him to lay a trap for them. They secured incriminating letters addressed to the elders of their own state and to Catiline, and the escort of a minor conspirator, and agreed to be suitably captured on their way home. The

capture took place as arranged on one of the Tiber bridges, in the very early hours of a dark winter's morning, and Cicero was put in triumphant possession of a whole boxful of incriminating documents. He at once sent for all the leaders of the conspiracy still in Rome, for their seals, well known, attested their guilt, and having summoned the Senate, brought accused and evidence before them. The minor conspirator escorting the Gauls, being offered pardon if he confessed, promptly betrayed the whole affair.

The Senate at once decreed the warmest thanks to Cicero for having laid bare the plot, and Cato himself called him the father of his country. All the conspiratorial leaders were unanimously declared guilty of acting against the interests of the Republic, and were put into free custody with men of rank, until their punishment should be decided. One of the less important was thus confided to Crassus' care, and one to Caesar's. There was some stifled laughter in the Senate when this was proposed, and Cicero himself wore a meaning smile, for the purpose of the suggestion was clear: if the prisoners escaped, little harm would be done the State, but Crassus and Caesar would be hopelessly inculpated. Both men were present in the Senate that day, and Caesar wished passionately that he knew how far Crassus was really committed, so as to know what line to take for himself. It seemed as if he were to learn in a manner sufficiently startling, for a second informer secured by Cicero to corroborate the first—"How faithful these conspirators are!" thought Caesar bitterly—began a statement that Crassus had sent him last night to Catiline with a message.

There was a moment's stupefied silence, then from all sides came a rain of interruptions.

"False! False!" shouted members, glancing over their shoulders at Crassus furtively or openly, according as they owed or hoped to owe him money.

For now that it came to the point they were afraid to inculpate a man so wealthy, to whom so many were in

debt; if Crassus were to be accused, it was more likely that the conspirators would all be saved with him, than he perish with them. And if he were accused and escaped condemnation, what a fearful vengeance he could inflict on almost every family in Rome, simply by calling in his money ! No; Crassus was the bull of the herd, Crassus had hay on his horns; better leave him alone. Crassus meanwhile, on the back bench he affected, his mean little toga huddled scantily round his square plump frame, sat calm beneath the gaze of so many hundred eyes, his finger in his palm as usual, his usual fixed smile on his lips. Caesar kept very quiet, did not smile, looked back at Crassus as the others looked but no differently, did his best in a word to attract no attention, for he suspected that the next name heard would be his own.

He was right. His enemies among the Optimates—especially men whom he had defeated at recent elections—began at once to try to trap the informer into naming Caesar. They did not succeed, for the man had not joined the plot till after Caesar left it; but whispers flew about and eyes looked askance, and when Caesar went down the temple steps at the session's close, some of Cicero's guard of young equites rushed at him, shouting and flourishing weapons. Caesar eyed them calmly, and descended without pause but without hurry; indeed, he reflected with cool amusement, he found this Catiline business so insufferably tedious that he would gladly cross the Styx if he could be sure no Catilinarian had required Charon's services before him. The young men, hustling about him, seemed to pause and look within towards Cicero, as if requesting a signal to slay. Caesar looked back too, and was amused—perhaps relieved too, after all—to observe the orator frown in outraged virtue and turn away. This disapproval, and Caesar's own unruffled calm, overawed the rash youths, and Caesar escaped unhurt.

When he reached home he was met with disquieting

news. The conspirators in custody, as if their case were not desperate enough already, had been sending messages to Catiline and about the City, trying to hire a mob of ruffians to come to their rescue.

"Well ! It will be interesting to see which of us are alive to-morrow night," drawled Caesar.

Cicero, hearing the same disturbing reports, set guards about the City, convoked the Senate for dawn next morning in the Temple of Concord to discuss the fate of the prisoners, and tried to make up his own mind what that fate should be.

The more he considered it, the more alarmed and uneasy he became.

As it chanced, that night was the festival of the women's goddess, whose rites, celebrated each year by the wife of consul or praetor, no man was allowed to see; he had therefore to leave his house to his wife, and expose himself to the conflicting opinions of others, just when he felt he needed a time for quiet thought.

It was really very difficult to know what to do with the conspirators. The law forbade any Roman to be put to death without an appeal to the people; but to call a people's assembly and take a vote at this juncture seemed to Cicero an invitation to riot which the undiscovered rank and file of Catiline's supporters could hardly fail to accept. Yet if the prisoners were banished, they would simply form another addition to Catiline's camp—and how ridiculous the honours voted to Cicero for their discovery would then appear ! Since the Senate had passed its ultimate decree entrusting the safety of the Republic to the consuls, the entire responsibility for any action taken rested upon Cicero and his colleague; and since his colleague half sympathised with the conspirators and was in any case a man of no personal force, the decision really rested with Cicero. As his litter bumped and swayed down the hill now he felt irritably that he ought never to have been placed in such a position; it was his part to speak, to elucidate, to make the issue

clear for the Senate to decide; he never pretended to be a man of action. He was not used, as these generals were, to giving commands which involved life and death. The toga for him, not the military cloak; the voice, not the sword. Yet if he shrank from exacting the final penalty, everyone would say that it was because he was afraid of the consequences. And that, with its accompanying laughter, would be quite intolerable. If however he exacted it, a fearful odium might attach to him when the danger was past and only the illegality of the act remembered. Terentia of course was all for the death penalty, but then she always favoured patrician extremes; the ferocity of her sentiments against any who did not believe that the ruling families of Rome had been set in power by the gods, had to be heard to be believed. Tullia on the other hand, gentle, neat little mouse that she was, turned pale when the death penalty was mentioned; while Atticus offered historical precedents, some of which seemed to prove that the consuls had the power of life and death after the ultimate decree had been passed, and some which proved the reverse. Nothing, in fact, could be more obscure and doubtful than the situation in which Cicero found himself.

At this point in his meditation he was set down at the house of Silanus, the consul-elect, and found it already full of an excited crowd of patrician Optimates. Cicero sighed.

Silanus came forward to greet him: a large solemn man, very steady but rather simple and slow. Everyone except himself knew that his wife was Caius Caesar's mistress, reflected Cicero irritably, smiling benignly on him now; really such simplicity was positively fatuous and ought not to be allowed; not, at any rate, in a consul-elect, whose opinion would have great weight in the Senate to-morrow morning. The exasperating part of it was that Silanus' domestic life was apparently very happy; he always looked contented, and spoke with admiring fondness of his wife.

Cicero had a sudden desire to ease his irritated nerves by dropping his host an unmistakable hint about Servilia, but he caught himself up in time—such behaviour was decidedly not the thing in patrician society, the whole fabric of which hung together by disregarding patent facts of that kind. Instead, Cicero made his way with deliberate courtesy to his hostess, and spoke to her with the fatherly benevolence which was so much admired in his manner to women. She was certainly handsome, he decided, watching her shrewdly as he boomed along, but too pale and austere for his taste; a Vestal Virgin's life would be more in her line. To be so quiet and aloof was to affect a superiority which in a woman was highly irritating, and she seemed quieter than ever to-night—anxious about her lover, no doubt, thought Cicero with virtuous condemnation; his position is certainly equivocal. A touch of malice crept into the orator's tone as he skilfully introduced the name of Caesar into his conversation, and gave an exaggerated account of the scene on the steps when the Pontifex, as he regretfully said, barely escaped with his life. He was rewarded by finding Servilia's grey eyes raised to his in a look of anguished query, which, however, she quickly veiled.

"She really loves him," thought Cicero, and he felt jealous and affronted, and almost wished he had given the signal which would have terminated Caesar's life that day. But no, no ! What was he thinking of ? Ashamed, he made a real effort to throw off the dejection which inspired such thoughts, and put on his most benign air to greet his hostess's two young sons.

And now the Optimates began to throng about Cicero, deferring to his opinion, congratulating him on his services to the State. Cicero knew well enough that they were flattering him for their own ends, that they had no idea themselves what to do in the present emergency and were only too delighted to have someone to do it for them, but that in itself was after all very soothing. After all, he reflected, his large

light eye beaming, his wide shapely mouth curved in its most genial smile, he was the best man there, new or no; if he did not extricate the Republic from its present troubles, nobody else would. Confidence almost visibly raised the lines of his face, drooping with worry, into their usual cheerful form; his voice took on its customary assured resonance, in his familiar—might he not almost call it his famous?—gesture, his left hand caressed his chin. The general opinion of the Optimates was undoubtedly strongly adverse to the conspirators, and when a message came from Terentia to describe a portent which had occurred in the religious rites, urging him to execute relentlessly the plan he had in mind, there was applause, and the death penalty seemed certain. For himself, Cicero could not help wishing, with a touch of his native rustic shrewdness, that the goddess had been a little more explicit in her directions, but he accepted the omen, and went home feeling again the famous consul, the father of his country, the man who saved Rome.

He was distinctly disappointed to find when dawn came that though the Forum was crowded with Roman citizens in a state of excitement, the attendance at the Senate was somewhat thin. This tendency to stay away when dangerous measures were to be discussed, so as to avoid their odium, was quite deplorable, reflected Cicero with exasperation; really there were times when he wondered whether the Senate was worth saving after all! Silanus, however, had not failed him, and when Cicero had laid the matter formally before the house, as his duty was, he called upon the consul-elect to speak first. Silanus arose and in a rather ponderous but dignified manner gave it as his opinion that those now in custody should suffer the supreme penalty.

Caesar had dressed with particular care that morning, and looked unusually spruce even by his own dandified standards, but in spite of himself his face was somewhat pale and set, for he found the situation a little grim. He noted, as had

Cicero, the absence of prominent members, both Optimates and Populares suffering in this way from the cowardice of their members; in particular Crassus had stayed away, and this was an absence which might have awkward consequences. Crassus would not condemn conspirators he had himself encouraged, it seemed, but neither would he defend them; he would not, evidently, hazard either his wealth or his person further than it was safe to go. Lacking the protection of his interest, things might go hard with them, and even with Caesar.

As the debate went on Caesar found his own decision more and more definite in his mind. He listened to Silanus with attention, however, trying to discover from his repetitions what the ordinary man really felt about the Catiline business, for he regarded Silanus as a good specimen of an ordinary Roman of the governing class. He had often wondered what Servilia said to Silanus on the subject of himself, but left it to her to do as she would—he trusted her completely, and it was her affair. Now, in any case, he reminded himself with some bitterness, since he and Servilia had quarrelled, it was certainly no longer his. Silanus at length ceased, and it was clear that his opinion had found great favour; many senators indicated their agreement in a phrase, without rising from their seats, while others began to cross the floor of the temple towards Silanus, anticipating the division when they would vote on his side. The atmosphere was one of excitement and tension; Cicero's voice was weighted with significance, speakers indulged in rhetorical apostrophes and patriotic historical allusions, which received applause. Caesar meanwhile arranged his ideas calmly; he wished to make the best speech he could, for it might very well be his last. He had not the slightest intention of abandoning men he had worked with, many of them kinsmen and connections, to an illegal fate. His turn came:

“Speak, Caius Julius!” intoned Cicero in the proper formula, turning on him a baleful glance.

Caesar rose, adjusted his hair with one finger, and in a cool and elegant drawl pointed out the true principles which should govern their decision: the futility of being swayed by passion, the necessity for judging the case on its merits, the complete illegality of the punishment proposed, the danger which such a precedent might bring upon the State. He joked pleasantly at those who dwelt upon the horrors threatened by the conspirators; since they were all in custody, he hinted, such alarmist speeches were a little beside the point. For his part, he by no means intended to give the prisoners the opportunity of swelling Catiline's army; he proposed for them confiscation of their estates, and perpetual confinement in suitable Italian towns. That would be legal, and perhaps after all a more severe punishment than death, for after death there is neither sorrow nor joy. Caesar's manner throughout was that of a calm adult rebuking excited children; the Senate fell under his domination, and grew ashamed of its former heat. He observed with secret joy that even before he finished speaking some members crossed to his side, and the faces of many others expressed agreement and relief. He sat down feeling that he had won the day and turned the house to his side. So strong became the expressions in his favour that Cicero intervened, summing up the two opinions which had been given, with a strong bias against Caesar. But the current was against him; and presently Silanus, pretending his opinion had been misunderstood, rose again and explained it away, as urging merely the severest punishment the law allowed. At this Caesar smiled, and inclined his head courteously to the speaker as though thanking him for his explanation. The matter now seemed practically settled, and the consul was urged by many to take the vote. Cicero hesitated, torn between thoughts of his danger, his importance, and the real perplexity of the question, and a strong voice from the tribunes' bench shouted:

"No ! Consult ! Consult !"

Everyone at once fell silent and looked in that direction. Cato was observed to be rising from his seat, his square face red with anger. It was, in fact, his turn to speak, and Cicero, though in a somewhat dubious tone, called on him.

"Conscript fathers!" shouted Cato in his rough harsh voice: "I don't agree at all!"

A groan of mingled amusement and resignation arose from the Senate at this, for Cato's speeches too often began with these words—he was too far out of harmony with the tendencies of the age to agree easily with anyone.

"I have often spoken at great length in this assembly against the luxury and effeminacy of our times," began Cato.

"Very true—you have indeed," said several voices ironically.

"But it's not now a question of whether we live in a good or bad state of morals," shouted Cato earnestly: "It's a question of whether we're to continue to live at all. It's not a question of punishing crime, it's a question of defending ourselves against enemies. These men are enemies of the Republic, taken in the act, and they should be killed as we kill an enemy on the field of battle—for if we don't, they'll kill us. If we leave them alive in Rome, all agree they may be rescued; how much more then will they be rescued, outside the City in small towns where the power of resistance is so much less? The proposal of Caius Caesar, therefore, if he fears any danger from them, is absurd; but if, when all the rest of us are afraid, he alone is free from alarm—then," he added in a significant tone, "*then* there is all the more danger for us, for those who do not fear the enemies of their country may properly be supposed to be in league with them. Why," he cried suddenly in a changed voice, pointing his blunt forefinger furiously at Caesar, his yellow eyes starting almost out of his head: "You actually receive letters from them now, in the very Senate!"

And indeed one of Caesar's lictors stood at his elbow,

respectfully proffering a note. Smiling with an air of cool amusement which he by no means felt, for the conjunction was awkward, Caesar broke the thread and seal, and read it. *Caius, I am distracted for your safety, he read: I heard last night of the attack upon you. If this note reaches you before you enter the Senate, I beg you not to go, but if you are already in the house, for my sake leave it. Remember that no one is dearer to me than you are. S.*

"A very awkward moment for a declaration of love," thought Caesar, and on a sudden impulse he tossed the roll across to Cato, who was still bellowing.

Cato started as he recognised his half-sister's seal, and his crimson face grew hotter as he read. "Take it, profligate!" he spluttered furiously when he had finished, throwing the letter back to Caesar. It was obvious to the amused Senate that the letter came from a woman, and ribald laughter started here and there among the younger members, while the older men cried shame and called for silence. After a moment's pause, Cato mastered himself and resumed his speech.

"Conscript fathers!" he shouted in a rough sardonic tone, his face still somewhat contorted: "If these conspirators are honest good men, who in their previous career have deserved well of the State, then spare them!"

A murmur of approval rose at this from the older members, for there was not a man of decent reputation in Catiline's whole band.

"There's no time for splitting hairs," went on Cato hoarsely. "Catiline has us by the throat, and other enemies swarm in the City—for don't imagine you have discovered them all; how could you?"

He continued in the same blunt style, and the house listened to him with increasing interest. They respected him for not allowing himself to be disconcerted by Caesar's note, and found his straightforward plainness an immense relief after Cicero's eloquence and Caesar's intellectual statement.

Besides, they reflected, Cato was honest; he had all he wanted already, and therefore nothing to gain. What he said seemed sound common sense, and tore Caesar's flimsy philosophies to shreds. Why be led by Caesar in any case? A man who, if he had not actually assisted the conspiracy, would have been glad to see it succeed. The feeling of the house swung back against the prisoners, and when Cato gave his opinion, in plain terms, which left no doubt of his meaning, in favour of capital punishment, the Senate hummed with commendation and applause. Cicero at once put the question; members rose and made their way across the floor of the house to their chosen side; presently they all found places and were seated. A mere score had let their feet carry them to Caesar; the rest, including the fickle Silanus, were all ranged beside Cato.

"This side appears the greater," cried Cicero cheerfully.

There was a shout of applause. Cato, glancing across at his defeated rival, gave him a grim and scornful smile. Indeed the debate, whatever its ultimate effect on the fortunes of the Republic, had increased the influence of the Stoic at the expense of that of the giver of panthers; on all sides senators were exclaiming approval of Cato, saying he was just the leader the party required. Caesar, white with anger but perfectly calm, slightly shrugged his shoulders, raised his eyebrows impertinently at Cato and, not wishing to remain in the Senate to witness the formal registering of the decree, quietly left the building. The punishment he had proposed for the conspirators was sufficiently severe to disarm, if not perhaps to lull, suspicion, and in any case it was no crime to be defeated in a debate in the Senate, so he reached his home unmolested.

As soon as the decree was passed Cicero closed the session, and, having commanded executioners to be in readiness at the near-by prison, sent guards to fetch the conspirators, going himself to fetch the highest in rank. He swept through the crowded Forum, excited, happy, glancing from side to

side with a smile of triumph on his lips; the crowd watched him silently in the gathering dusk, not quite understanding what was afoot. Cicero thought he saw among them some small but compact groups who looked as if they had gathered there for a special purpose, and that purpose a rescue; his voice therefore was not reluctant but almost hurried, as he gave the order for the condemned men to die. The strangling was suitably carried out in an underground dungeon, and Cicero announced solemnly in his loud ringing tone:

"They have lived!"

Then indeed, the matter being settled once and for all, the crowd broke into frantic acclamation of their consul. A splendid train of senators accompanied Cicero to his house on the Palatine, but their lictors could hardly force their passage along the streets, so great was the press of admiring citizens offering congratulations and applause. The women set lamps in the doors, and on the roofs of their houses, in Cicero's honour; others, they said, had enlarged Rome's dominions abroad, but Cicero had preserved the City itself from fire and slaughter, Cicero had saved Rome.

All that night the City hummed with talk of Catiline and Cicero.

"The Republic is as strong as ever she was when she chooses," affirmed Cato, at ease amid his family, in his grating tones. "Let all the traitorous generals, all the smooth-tongued demagogues, come against her if they like; we can beat 'em all as we always have done, if only we keep to the good old ways."

"But surely the Senate ought to keep the Republic's laws? Why didn't they allow the conspirators an appeal to the people?" queried Brutus with an air of trouble.

"Because the people might have let 'em off," said Cato. "You can't trust the mob on a difficult point, in a crisis; you must take the responsibility yourself, my boy."

"But if it had been *explained*," worried Brutus, contracting his smooth forehead painfully.

"Nonsense," said Cato with decision. He paused, then added roughly: "All that fuss Cicero made was quite unnecessary, and very bad for the citizens. Remember: it's easier to light a fire than to put it out. When the wind ceases to blow, the sea is not at once calm."

His young daughter, sitting quiet in a corner, listened to the discussion eagerly, her fiery glance darting between uncle and nephew as they spoke. Cato's yellow eyes, resting on her, softened.

"Repeat the Stoic dogma on feeling, my child," he bade her gruffly.

"The Stoic despises emotion," recited Porcia in a clear firm tone: "His feelings should never be shown."

Brutus sighed.

"Written at Rome on the Nones of December, 691 years from the foundation of the City. Cicero to Atticus, greeting. The Senate has decreed a thanksgiving in my honour," dictated Cicero, as he paced between his beloved books and statues, joyously. *"No one not a general has had such an honour before. Cato with his own lips called me father of my country."* "I have saved the City from fire and sword," he thought, waiting while his slave wrote. "My name will go down to history as Rome's greatest consul. I have established a new concord among the classes; the best of all ranks, whether patricians, equites or people, all follow my lead. Yes, a 'new man' has saved Rome."

"This has cost me a pretty penny," grumbled Crassus,

looking at the accounts his slave was presenting him, distastefully, "and come to nothing in the end. But at least," he reflected, brightening, "it's settled now—they won't have to send for Pompey." He considered a moment, and decided: "When the fuss about Catiline has died down I can continue that young Clodius, perhaps, on something the same lines. . . . Yes. That seems best. I must have somebody to back the interests of the equites against the patricians, in the Senate. Caius Caesar is useful but too independent. Clodius will do. He's much in debt."

The slave withdrew; Crassus closed his eyes and turned the events of the last few days over in his mind. He remembered how the informer who mentioned his name (quite truthfully) had been shouted down.

"Nothing is more powerful than money," decided Crassus, smiling with his eyes still closed, so that he looked like a purring cat.

"I once thought," silently mused Caesar, who held Servilia in his arms: "I once thought that the way to power was by either an overwhelming military force or an overwhelming political combination. But in Rome that is not so, for no political combination holds against self-interest, in Rome. How many of the conspirators' friends voted with me to-day? No! Nothing can be done without military power."

Servilia stirred against his breast.

"I have weathered this Catiline storm, I think," calculated Caesar, silently stroking her hair. "It is no crime to put forward an opinion in the Senate and be defeated on it—even Cato must admit that my behaviour was perfectly in accordance with the law. In a few days' time I shall enter upon my year as praetor. After that year I shall have an unimportant province—the gods grant me a war there! Then I shall be consul. Then I shall have a consular province and

an army, at last. Nothing can be done in Rome without military power."

Servilia sighed.

"What is the matter, child?" said Caesar tenderly.

"I was thinking," she murmured, "of the conspirators' wives."

AN ALLIANCE, BUT THE WRONG ONE

"YOU INSTRUCTED ME to inform you when we sighted Italy, sir," said the captain.

Pompey sprang up and went on deck.

His body was a little more solid, his movements a little less nimble, he reflected, than when he last saw Italy five years ago; the veins of one leg were somewhat swollen, and his springing hair was not so lustrous as of old; but he had surely gained a dignity, a stateliness of bearing—he was now a man in the prime of life, a man of great achievements, the conqueror of Asia, a man experienced, mature. Or at least, he ought to be feeling like that, thought Pompey as he shaded his eyes to gaze at the thin shadow in the west, but in fact he was somehow uneasy and unsure. He ought to be delighted to be nearing his fatherland again—and indeed he was; he dearly loved his home. But what awaited him in Rome after all, mused Pompey mournfully. Motherless children, an empty hearth! For he had been obliged to divorce Mucia without even seeing her; the reports of her unfaithfulness were too persistent, too public to be disregarded, the nearer he drew to Italy the more abominable they became. He had Caius Caesar to thank for that. There were alleged to be others too who had taken advantage of their absent general, but Pompey was sure that the witty, dandified, profligate Caesar was most to blame. How Rome must have laughed to read Pompey's accounts of his victories in Asia, when he was being thus dishonoured at home! So Pompey brooded, increasing his own torment.

He would need to learn all the intricate politics of Rome

again, too, thought Pompey irritably, for he had forgotten them in the past five years. Letters came regularly from home, of course, and at first he had understood all the allusions and followed them up carefully, but gradually more immediate affairs ousted them from his mind. After all, when one was busy making and unmaking huge kingdoms, when one was occupied with settling Pontus, Armenia, Cappadocia, Syria, Cilicia, Mesopotamia, Palestine and so on and so on, it was difficult to feel excited about the oft-recurring elections in Rome. Demetrius constantly harangued him on the subject, trying to make him understand the alignment of parties, but Pompey listened to him with but one ear, and impatiently; it all seemed very tedious, and quite remarkably obscure. Letters had constantly arrived during the last two years, for example, from Marcus Tullius Cicero, whom Pompey remembered as a rising orator of decent country stock who had made a good speech about his own appointment to Asia, a pushing but honest sort of man, who might quite possibly reach the rank of aedile if he continued to make himself so serviceable. And now this Cicero had actually been consul, it appeared, and wrote the most extraordinary letters, praising himself for having saved Rome! He had the audacity to reprove Pompey for not congratulating him sufficiently, and hinted at the desirability of a political alliance! Between Pompey the Great and a new man with a name like Cicero! It was twelve months since his precious consulship now, but the letters still went on. But what had Cicero done, in the gods' name, and who was this Catiline about whom there was so much fuss? Another Lepidus, reflected Pompey contemptuously, whom he himself could have finished off with a couple of cohorts in an afternoon. He almost wished the Senate had not managed to suppress the affair without him. Caesar and Crassus were implicated in the conspiracy, it seemed, and Cato had headed the Senate in putting it down. Caesar! Crassus! Cato! Pompey grimaced at all these names. (Cato had visited him

in Asia; a rude, arrogant, dogmatic young man.) Yes, ever since they left Asia Demetrius had bothered Pompey daily to make up his mind to which party he intended to adhere; but Pompey had still come to no decision. The Senate had always been tiresome to him; there was that old matter of starving his men in Spain, and they had received one or two of his officers, who had gone home before him to stand in elections, very badly. So perhaps he had better stick to the Populars, who had secured him the Asian command. But could he join a party which held Caesar and Crassus? Crassus? Not that he intended harm to Crassus; he had sent him a friendly letter only last week; but still—Crassus? And Caesar? The seducer of his wife? Pompey winced.

The shadow on the horizon spread and thickened, and became the sandy coast about Brundisium; the ship, bounding cheerfully across the sparkling silver sea, passed the outermost lighthouse and began to make her way in long swinging tacks between the yellow islands. A fleet of little fishing boats now hove in sight, come out to welcome the Republic's great general. They made a charming sight dotted about the wide outer harbours with their cheering crews and coloured sails, but Pompey looked at them gloomily. One of them brought a bag of letters, he saw, and sighed; more trouble, doubtless.

Demetrius, who as usual was dealing with the general's correspondence, rushed up to Pompey with a look of delight on his smooth though now rather faded face.

"What is it?" demanded Pompey with dignity, hoping secretly for some honour from the Senate.

Demetrius said in a low joyous tone: "Gaius Caesar is obliged to divorce his wife."

"No!" exclaimed Pompey. "Who is the man? Does the letter say?"

"Yes," replied the freedman. "Clodius. A friend of Caesar, and a dear friend of Crassus." He laughed, and explained with gusto that when the mysteries of the women's

goddess were being celebrated in the house of Caesar (he being Pontifex and praetor) a week or two ago, Clodius had been caught within in woman's dress, obviously in pursuit of the young mistress of the house, for whom he had a notorious fondness. It was alleged that when Caesar, summoned home by his mother, heard the news, his sole observation to his terrified wife was: "You silly child! Now I shall have to divorce you." Pompey involuntarily exclaimed in disgust at such a lack of dignity, and Demetrius went on eagerly: "The Senate have ordered the augurs and Vestal Virgins to investigate the religious sacrilege, and it is possible that Clodius will be brought to trial. Caesar may have to give evidence."

He laughed again and searched his patron's face for the enjoyment he was sure Pompey must feel at this humiliation of the man who had similarly humiliated him. Pompey indeed felt as though a weight had been rolled from his heart, but the look of expectation on Demetrius' face somewhat offended his notions of his dignity; he gave a cold reply and turned away. His spirits suddenly rose, however, and he gazed ahead at the land, which seemed to come swimming out to meet him, happily. After all, this was Italy! The people here spoke Latin, were his countrymen! The buildings of Brundisium rose before him, very clear and white in the setting sun; surely those were the columns which marked the end of the Appian Way? The Appian Way, which led to Rome! Ah, Rome! A rush of warm feeling filled Pompey's heart, he smiled and his brown eyes grew bright; he raised his hand in gracious acknowledgment of the fishermen's greetings. The ship's captain, standing beside him, observed him with fond respect, and Demetrius smiled with satisfaction.

"Bring up some of the captive princes and the trophies," commanded Pompey, turning to his officers with sparkling eyes. "Arrange a procession. We will disembark in a manner worthy of our achievements."

The Senate presently heard that Pompey had landed in Italy amid scenes of tremendous enthusiasm.

This was a piece of news they had long been expecting, but when they further heard that Pompey had forthwith disbanded his army, with the utmost correctness, they were no less surprised than relieved. The army itself was somewhat surprised, and not a few of Pompey's officers hinted to him that he had a very favourable opportunity to march on Rome. But their hints were not well received by their general.

"March on Rome?" repeated Pompey in a tone of disapproving surprise. "But it would be utterly against the laws! Why should I march on Rome? Do you think I am Marius or Sulla?"

Thus snubbed, his officers dropped the notion promptly.

Demetrius alone ventured to tell Pompey plainly that he would thus secure supreme power in the City. He too desisted, though reluctantly, when he saw that Pompey, in spite of all he had heard of recent affairs in Rome, at the bottom of his heart imagined everything he wanted would be poured into his lap by an adoring combination of people and Senate. Pompey was too proud to explain openly that he had conferred a whole new empire, of immense extent and resource, together with some millions of annual tribute, upon Rome, and that he expected a little gratitude for the gift, but it was obvious that this was what he felt; and after all, it was a sufficiently reasonable expectation.

It was not, however, fulfilled, in spite of Cicero's efforts to add a great general to his concord of all parties. The patricians among the Optimates, flushed by their recent victory over Catiline, felt strong enough to indulge the resentment they always felt towards any honour not won by their own families, and in this they were encouraged by Cato, who since the debate on the conspirators' punishment had an increasing influence in the Senate. Cato behaved, now as always, like a statue of ancient Roman virtue on a very high pedestal, and persisted in regarding Pompey as the danger

to the State he might have been if he had not disbanded his army. "He shan't come armed into the City while *I'm* alive!" shouted Cato—it would be easier to teach an ass to read, thought Cicero in despair, than to convince Cato that Pompey was not attempting anything of the kind. Cato actually declined Pompey's marriage proposal for his young daughter, Porcia—a refusal which in the circumstances was intolerably humiliating to Mucia's late husband. Caesar, manœuvring with his customary skill, contrived to embroil Pompey and the Senate on several minor but irritating matters, for he saw clearly that if Pompey and the Senate were to be reconciled, then the Popular party would be lost indeed. Cicero saw it too, pleaded earnestly for conciliation, tried hard to attach Pompey to the party of "all good men"; but his pleadings were so inseparably mingled with conceited praises of his own famous consulship that they were discredited, and the breach grew wider every day. Pompey needed a grant of public land for his veteran soldiers, and confirmation of all his arrangements in Asia, from the Senate; that body could hardly give a direct refusal to proposals so customary and reasonable, but they delayed the land question by tacking it on to other similar proposals, and adopted the exasperating plan of discussing all his settlements item by item. Pompey, who loathed public argument, had not a good head for detail, and was apt to be flustered when called on suddenly to make an explanatory speech, fared badly by this system, and all the patrician generals whom he had so arrogantly displaced in Asia rejoiced. In these circumstances Cicero's well-meant exhortations to him about "concord," with their slightly patronising air, were simply infuriating; Pompey quarrelled with no party, but it was because he was friendly with none.

Meanwhile the trial of Clodius for the invasion of the sacred women's mysteries came on. An agitation convulsed Rome over this affair which to Pompey appeared quite preposterous. To him Clodius was a handsome dissolute young

rascal of the usual unstable modern type, a patrician by birth, a demagogue by inclination, and there was an end. Naturally the friends of Clodius tried to get the bill for his trial dropped in the Senate, and naturally that tiresome Cato made long speeches about the moral decay of the age; but why Cicero thundered so about the concord of all best men depending on Clodius' condemnation Pompey could not imagine. He did not see that to Cicero the rake Clodius appeared another Catiline in the egg, and that the trial had become a trial of strength between the parties, because everything nowadays became that. There was trouble about passing the bill, there was trouble about the choice of judges; armed guards were provided for the witnesses, and the crowd at the trial seemed ready at any moment to take sides and riot. This was not the Rome Pompey knew, and he felt bewildered in it. He watched with interest, however, as did everyone in Rome, to see what Caesar would do in circumstances so awkward; it seemed as though he could hardly fail either to appear in the odious light of complacent husband, or to play into the hands of the Optimates by helping to condemn a political ally.

Clodius, who with his thin reckless face, bloodshot blue eyes and flaming hair looked handsome but very dissipated, wisely did not attempt to counter the evidence of his constant immorality which was poured out against him from all quarters, but rested his defence on an alibi, alleging that he was in a town in the Apennines ninety miles away at the time when the sacrilege occurred in Rome. But Cicero with a beaming and triumphant air announced in his resonant tones that he had seen Clodius in Rome, three hours after he was supposed to have left the City. At this violent shouts arose from the assembled crowd; some of approval, hailing Cicero as the father of his country, and others calling him a murderer: both opinions referring to the famous Catiline executions. Caesar when called upon to give evidence said that he knew nothing of the matter, and though the presiding

praetor questioned him closely, he uttered nothing against Clodius. His pretty little wife, sobbing and distraught, had begged him before the divorce not to incriminate her lover, and he had willingly given a promise which accorded with his own wishes—Clodius was a friend of Crassus, and had been his own boon companion; besides, Caesar knew well enough that he had neglected his wife, and could not therefore very well, he thought, adopt a severe moral attitude to her attempts at self-consolation; he was no Cato. The praetor asked him why, then, if he knew nothing of the matter, he had divorced his wife. This was an awkward question.

"*My wife*," replied Caesar in a haughty drawl, "must be above even suspicion."

He was so amused by the notion of a rake like himself giving utterance to this lofty sentiment that he involuntarily smiled, and though he bit his lip, the lines of amusement deepening in his cheek betrayed him. The crowd, as amused as he, set up a shout of laughter, and the remark was repeated all over Rome with meaning winks. Pompey professed himself disgusted, but secretly envied Caesar his power of always coming out on top of an awkward situation. Meanwhile a majority of the judges was bought by Crassus and acquitted Clodius.

Cicero could not believe his ears when he heard it; his flexible jaw dropped, and for more than an hour he made no reference to his famous consulship. The concord of all good men had, he felt, received a terrific blow. A rascal like Clodius to escape the punishment all honest citizens must desire for him! Another Catiline let loose! O Rome, O justice! It struck him, too, that he had made himself an unscrupulous enemy by his evidence. Cicero went home very soberly, and dined alone that night.

As soon as the trial was over, Caesar left for his praetorial province in Spain. It was said that Crassus had stood security for him to his creditors before they would let him leave at all; it was also said that brigands were giving trouble in his

province, in the west. Pompey, who had looked a little glum at the first item of news, brightened at the second. He remembered those bare brown mountains, those exasperating streams.

"Spain," he observed with a judicial air, "has been the tomb of many reputations."

"But not of yours, Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus," countered one of his officers, stressing the last name.

Pompey courteously bowed his head in acknowledgment. Such small compliments were particularly soothing to him, because his position grew more and more uncomfortable every day. The Senate, staunchly led by Cato, still kept him dangling; his acts in Asia were still unconfirmed, his soldiers still had no grant of lands, the only reward they might expect for their faithful service. They were good fellows, liked him and tried not to grumble, but their faith (and his popularity) was sinking low. On Demetrius' advice he decided to use bribery at the elections in order to secure a consul who should be favourable to him; but Pompey was not skilful in bribery, he hated it too much to do it well. The money was given out so openly in his garden that quite a scandal was created, and Cato boasted in the Senate of having refused his daughter to a general so corrupt. Pompey's candidate was elected in spite of Cato, but once in office he seemed unable to do anything to help; Pompey had evidently chosen the wrong man for the job.

"Can't you get a tribune to propose a land law to the assembly of the people?" said Pompey to Demetrius irritably, remembering those earlier tribunes who had so agreeably secured him power.

Demetrius obediently found a tribune—the usual kind of fellow, thought Pompey disdainfully, with abundant greasy hair and a flat face like a frog: all those tribunes of the plebs looked just the same—but somehow the land law was not taken up enthusiastically by the people; Pompey had been home more than a year now, his triumphs were over and his

glory was a little stale. Instead, they excited themselves about a contest between Crassus and Cato which was occupying the Senate just now. Crassus wanted the Senate to release the tax-farmers from a much too high bid they had inadvertently made, but Cato—behaving, as Cicero said, as if he were living in the ideal republic of Plato instead of modern Rome—spoke in his usual downright uncompromising style on the matter, and the concession was refused. Pompey for once agreed heartily with Cato, but Cicero was in despair, seeing the patricians and the men of money thus at variance. If the solid men of all parties did not remain united, how could they keep the revolutionaries out? Clodius let loose! And the news from Spain so disturbing! For Caius Caesar, it appeared, had arrived, collected twenty cohorts, marched to the west and commanded the brigand tribes to surrender, before anyone had thought it possible for him to have reached Spain at all. The astonished tribes were taken completely unawares, and found themselves pushed out of their hills into the sea almost before they believed the tidings of his arrival. They fled to an island; Caesar pursued them on rafts. Rafts! If by any chance Caesar were to prove a successful general, reflected Cicero uncomfortably, then the Senate would need all its resources indeed! And here it was, alienating Pompey with one hand, Crassus with the other. Really Cato's unbending Stoic virtue was far from serviceable to the Republic! Cicero mourned, and talked about his consulship and the concord of all good men till everyone was sick of hearing him.

The rafts which alarmed Cicero so deeply were not very successful because of the unfamiliar tides, and Caesar had to return to the mainland and collect a proper fleet before he could settle the brigands as he wished. He chafed under the delay, for he was not seriously interested in Spain at the

moment. It offered insufficient scope for his talents; this was not a proper campaign, this did not tell him whether he was a general or no. Moreover, he wanted to be back in Rome in time to stand for the consulship at the forthcoming elections. He could not leave the job half done, however; so he tidied up the western tribes, made a reasonable peace with them, arranged a financial composition, sorely needed because of Roman exactions, in the more civilised parts of Spain, and hurried back to Italy, taking with him a nice little sum of money and the title of Imperator, properly conferred on him by his soldiers in the field. Considering his Spanish achievements, during the long journey home, Caesar decided that they were really more substantial than they had seemed at the time; he was not dissatisfied with them, and thought he might reasonably ask the Senate for a triumph, for they complied with the prescribed regulations. He had brought back some interesting trophies, and saw himself delighting the populace with a really first-class show. (He could put forward a better one than Pompey, he was sure, in spite of Pompey's infinitely superior resources; for Pompey had no talent for display, out of sheer pride and bashfulness he always contrived to make his gifts look less than they were.) But generals who desired triumphs must remain outside Rome, while candidates for the consulship had to present themselves in person; so his two ambitions could not proceed at the same moment, unless the Senate would grant him permission to be an absent candidate. Such a concession was by no means unprecedented, nor was it illegal, if properly passed in a decree and confirmed by the people's assembly, and Caesar hopefully sent in a respectful request to this effect.

As was natural in a body of several hundred members, there were different opinions as to the answer which ought to be returned. By very many Caesar was detested as the leader of a hated party, but there were some among the Optimates—especially those who had relatives serving with

him in Spain—who were decidedly impressed by his military successes, and thought it might be well to conciliate a general who knew how to win, and win so promptly. Besides, his request was impeccably legal and polite. Then there were Caesar's own adherents; and there were the many ordinary persons who looked only on the surface, and thought that if a general added a large stretch of land to Roman rule by fighting, naturally he had a triumph—it had always been so and always would. Caesar had therefore some reason to hope that his petition might be granted, and when letters arrived from Rome one warm summer night, and were brought to him as he lay companionably drinking with some of his officers, he tore them open eagerly.

A grim smile curved his lips as he read. The discussion of his request had been talked out by Cato. It was the right of every member of the Senate, when called on for his opinion, to speak how, and as long as, he chose, neither the officer presiding nor any other member having the right to stop him. The occasional inconvenience of this otherwise admirable rule was mitigated by the habit of interjection, for tedious members were submitted to a shower of sarcasms which, unless they could secure an official command for silence, usually unnerved them into sitting down. But no mere sarcasm could unnerve Cato—he was too used to it, too sure that he was right—and he had talked and talked, in his harsh grating monotonous voice, while the bored house thinned, until at last the failing daylight terminated the session. To-day was the last before the nomination; the concession could not therefore be passed in time, and must be dropped.

"These Stoics know their minds," commented Caesar, handing back the letters to Philemon, thoughtfully.

His staff fixed anxious eyes on him, but dared not speak.

"Order the carriage," said Caesar after a moment to the secretary: "I must be in Rome before dawn."

"Rome? But your triumph?" cried an officer.

"Pooh! If I can't have both of course I choose the

consulship," said Caesar briefly. Seeing their faces fall he added with an air of sympathy: "It is the Senate disapproves you, friends, not your general."

He reached Rome with barely an hour to spare before the time when he must publicly present himself, but when he had bathed and dressed in the candidate's whitened toga, he asked Aurelia to tell him all the news of the City while he ate. Aurelia had looked much older since the Catiline conspiracy, when she saw her son go to the Senate every day doubting whether he would return alive, and the disgrace (as she saw it) of the Clodius affair had further greatly tried her; her massive shoulders stooped a little now, her strong face was bleached and lined. She told him swiftly enough what he wanted to know, however: Pompey, having not yet secured either the confirmation of his acts or the grant of land, had dropped the tribune's land bill in despair, and was sulking in the country, while Crassus, in high dudgeon over its harshness to the taxpayers, had ceased to attend the Senate, where Cato now crowed and flapped his wings like a cock on his own dunghill. Caesar smiled at the mention of Cato; there was a surprise in store for that stiff Stoic! At this moment Julia ran in. Having but just awakened and learned of her father's arrival, she looked deliciously fresh and eager; her crocus curls shone, her blue eyes sparkled, her lovely cheek was warm with sleep. She flung herself on her father's breast. Caesar, delighted, took her on his knee, caressed her curls and admired the sweetness of her profile. Aurelia chid them mildly for their informality, but nevertheless observed their mutual affection with pleasure. During Caesar's absence he had betrothed Julia by letter to a political friend of his, a relation of Servilia's; he now asked teasingly how she liked her future husband. Julia pouted.

"Father, he's very *ordinary*," she said.

A look of calculation sprang suddenly into Caesar's eyes. Aurelia began a stern rebuke to her grand-daughter, but

Caesar checked her with a glance. It was time for him to go; he took leave of them thoughtfully.

His unexpected appearance in Rome made a great impression. Even Cato could not disapprove of a decision to serve one's country in an onerous office in preference to receiving acclamations in a triumph; his face when he saw the adversary he thought he had foiled, and was obliged to commend his coming, showed such a conflict of feeling that Caesar was hard put to it not to laugh. Caesar took care to remind the Roman populace of the splendid shows he had given them when aedile, and to explain that it was the Senate's fault he could not at present entertain them similarly; spruce, affable, agreeably tanned, as witty as ever, with the added air of command proper to a victorious general, he at once resumed his place in their affections, and his canvass made an excellent start. He gave the story of his return and his good prospects a few days to circulate, and then had himself driven out to see Pompey.

Pompey was astounded when his visitor's name was announced to him. Caesar was the last man in the world he wished to receive, and he considered it sheer impudence on the younger man's part to present himself. Pompey was in a position wretched for any general, but particularly so for the magnificent conqueror of the East; he did not know how he had fallen into it, nor how to get out of it; thwarted on every side, he felt the helpless rage of a baited animal, but he had cut his own claws by dismissing his army, and could only sulk and suffer. So low was he reduced that he positively feared Caesar had come to insult him; but he would not fail in the traditions of Roman hospitality whatever the consequences, and in a proud tone commanded his servants to admit the guest and treat him honourably. They returned at once with a message from Caesar requesting an interview.

"I shall be glad to receive him," said Pompey in a low tone which trembled with rage.

Caesar was promptly ushered in. He greeted his host with

such a serious and respectful air that Pompey's sore heart was somewhat soothed, and with only a slight hesitation he granted Caesar's request for complete privacy, and dismissed his attendants.

"Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus," began Caesar at once: "I have heard since my return from Spain that you think yourself injured by me in the matter of your wife."

The blood rushed to Pompey's face; he stared at Caesar, enraged, stupefied.

"Had I known this before," went on Caesar regretfully, "I should have cleared myself to you earlier."

"Do you mean to tell me the accusation is not true?" broke out Pompey.

"No—but I was not the first, nor the only one, to blame," said Caesar, throwing Mucia's reputation overboard without a qualm. "She was not worthy of your greatness, Magnus."

"You come on a strange errand," gasped Pompey, really unable to decide what in such an unprecedented situation he ought to say.

"I come to ask you to lay aside your mistaken resentment," pursued Caesar rapidly, "and to offer you my help in securing the proper settlement of your Asiatic affairs. When I am consul—when I am consul," he repeated meaningfully, "your acts will not long need confirmation nor your soldiers lands. In a word," he concluded smoothly: "You need a decree from the Senate, Crassus needs a decree from the Senate, I need the consulship. Let us unite and secure what we need."

"Crassus!" exclaimed Pompey with distaste.

"His wealth will be useful," explained Caesar, relegating Crassus, by his tone, to the inferior position of mere money-lender. "What do you say, Cnaeus Pompey?"

"I must consider," said Pompey in a flurry, quite distracted. "I must pause to consider."

"No, don't consider," urged Caesar, suddenly smiling his

most charming smile. "Say yes, and take the victory, as you did by the river Lycus."

"You know how to flatter, Caius Julius," said Pompey, colouring, touched in spite of himself by this knowledgeable reference to one of his most difficult and splendid Asian battles.

"Flatter! I am not flattering, Magnus," said Caesar softly, in a tone of admiration. "I do not know the country of Mithridates, but I too have fought in Spain."

Pompey exclaimed, smiled, looked away. "Not an easy country," he said.

"*Not* an easy country," agreed Caesar emphatically.

From this it was simple to draw Pompey into talk of his victories. To defer to him, to flatter him, to prick him by occasional skilful reminders of the insults of Cato and the Senate: this was simple too. It was not, however, quite so simple to secure Pompey's definite assent to the proposed coalition scheme, either at this or at further meetings.

"Does he ever make up his mind about anything?" wondered Caesar in exasperation as day after day passed, and Pompey still gave no definite reply. He had meanwhile secured the co-operation of Crassus, who when the subject was broached to him exclaimed: "Pompey!" with exactly the same air of distaste which Pompey had worn when speaking of him. On this occasion Caesar merely smiled vaguely and said nothing, thinking he could safely leave Crassus to discover for himself how awkward a combination Pompey and Caesar would be for him unless he joined it. His reliance on Crassus' intelligence was justified, for almost at once the plutocrat remarked, with something less than his ordinary composure:

"You mean to desert me for Pompey, hey?"

"How can I desert you, Marcus Licinius, when you can ruin me to-morrow if you choose?" said Caesar impatiently.

"True. Let's see, how much do you owe me now?"

remarked Crassus, who was perfectly aware of the amount, maliciously, his black eyes glittering.

"Two thousand and one talents and some sesterces," replied Caesar promptly. "Your only hope of getting paid is to provide me with a lucrative province."

"Will you take my son Publius on your staff when you go?" muttered Crassus, dropping his eyes.

"I shall be delighted to have his assistance," replied Caesar with an air of sincerity. "From what I hear he is a young man of exceptional talent and learning, with a very accomplished aristocratic wife."

"You had better leave his wife alone, Caius Caesar," growled Crassus.

Caesar laughed. "Well, and what about Pompey?" he enquired cheerfully.

Crassus shrugged and looked away. "If he agrees," he said.

In these circumstances Pompey's hesitation was particularly irritating, as Crassus would be affronted if the negotiation now fell through. Caesar tried to coax Pompey back to Rome, but failing in that, prevailed on him to spend a few days secretly as Caesar's guest in his new seaside villa. (The villa had been bought for the purpose, and would be sold as promptly, but Pompey, who never heard gossip till it was stale, did not know that.) Caesar took Aurelia and Julia with him to the sea, and to make a favourable air for his guest's reception, spoke often to them of Pompey's achievements, his good nature, his simple honest life. Julia listened eagerly, but Aurelia received these stories with an air of reserve. One night she said to her son bluntly:

"Do you tell us these things for a purpose, Caius, or are they true?"

"Both," replied Caesar. He smiled, but would say nothing more.

When Pompey, perplexed and hesitant, at length arrived, Aurelia at once took a great liking to him. He was so polite,

so gentle, so well-meaning, so solid and honest and somehow countrified, that she could not but approve of him, and she did not conceal her approval. To Caesar she said :

“ You should deal fairly with Cnaeus Pompey, Caius; he deserves it.”

Caesar replied shortly: “ I intend to.” Observing that Julia listened, he added: “ Pompey is a really great man.”

“ You speak more truth than you mean,” said Aurelia drily.

Pompey was happy in Aurelia's approval, happy in Julia's youthful awestruck admiration; happy too, to his own surprise, in intercourse with Caesar. It was a relief to Pompey to talk to a man who was his equal in birth, sense and experience, yet treated him with soothing deference; who understood what he meant almost before he said it, and had new things to tell of his own, yet made no tiresome pretensions which had to be combated. Caesar's conversation was greatly superior to that of Pompey's officers, and Pompey was able to enjoy it, because he felt that Caesar was not his rival now, but on his side. With Caesar one could enjoy the luxury, so rare for those in authority, of telling a story against oneself without being misunderstood, because Caesar himself often did the same. Demetrius approved of the proposed coalition, for Caesar, who had seen at once his position with regard to Pompey, took pains to impress, conciliate and convince him; so on every count Pompey was content. He felt soothed and happy, the frowns were smoothed out from his forehead, he smiled, his nature expanded and revealed its honest simple charm.

One dazzling sunny morning Caesar, having received the calls of ceremony paid him by local notabilities, went up to the garden on the roof of the house, and lounged on a marble seat there in deep thought, not seeing the white pillars, the roses, the pale hot sky, the sparkling blue ripples of the bay. The inaction of the past few days fretted his nerves, and he tried to plan means of bringing Pompey to a

favourable decision rapidly. Any kind of pressure might so easily defeat its own ends; Pompey might shy away like a startled horse. Caesar had gone no further in his thoughts when Julia came running out, clear and fresh and sweet as always. Her face fell a little when she saw he was alone.

"Cnaeus Pompey is not here yet?" she queried timidly, standing in front of him.

"As you see," said Caesar, smiling. He took one of the silk cushions from behind his head and threw it gently to the pavement beside him. Julia obediently sank down upon it and rested her head against his knee.

"Isn't it a most beautiful day, father?" said Julia with a little sigh.

"Most beautiful," agreed Caesar absently.

At this moment he heard Pompey's step in the archway. In a flash he decided to take a chance on his whole plan, and said in a quiet confidential tone, clear enough however to be heard across the roof:

"How should you like to marry Pompeius Magnus, Julia?"

"O, so much!" cried Julia, clapping her hands together in rapture. She turned her lovely sparkling face up to her father—and saw Pompey standing a few steps behind him. "O!" cried Julia, horrified. She buried her face in the folds of her father's toga, and clung to him convulsively.

Caesar, looking back over his shoulder at Pompey, smiled apology. He was about to utter some neat sentence asking forgiveness for having expressed to his daughter his own great wish, when he saw that it was quite unnecessary, for Pompey was really moved. Indeed when Julia spoke a warm flood of feeling invaded Pompey's heart; he had not felt so flattered, so happy, so full of hope, so safe, so much at ease, since that day years ago when the praetor had offered him his daughter Antistia. That this delicious young creature should look on him with admiration, love;

should want to marry him! He coloured with sheer happiness.

"Indeed I should be most honoured," he began formally, and broke off, unable to continue for emotion.

Caesar changed the quality of his smile, looked with affection from Pompey to his daughter, and gently disengaging his toga from Julia's grasp, caressed her hair and rose.

"I think I am not needed here," he remarked affably. He laid his hand in friendly pressure on Pompey's arm, and walked away.

Pompey sat down on the marble seat he had vacated, and bent over the kneeling girl.

"Look at me, Julia," he said.

"O, Cnaeus Pompey," murmured Julia, raising to him a cheek rosy with blushes, and eyes which seemed bluer than ever now that they were filled with tears: "I assure you—I beg—I had no idea . . ."

"It would be a great happiness for me, my dear," said Pompey simply. He took her frightened little hands between his own and smiled down at her, his brown eyes warm and kind.

"But you're so famous!" murmured Julia with a little sob, adoring him.

Caesar, who had paused by the archway to see how they went on together, smiled and passed quietly into the house.

An hour later Pompey came to him. He looked as happy as a boy, but somewhat embarrassed; to spare his dignity Caesar at once uttered the sentence he had previously prepared.

"I was voicing my own great wish in the words you heard me speak to my daughter, Magnus," he said in a serious and lofty tone.

"If it is your wish, it is mine too," replied Pompey. The matter was arranged between them.

"But she's betrothed to someone else!" exclaimed

Pompey suddenly, horizontal lines of worry furrowing his brow. He gazed at Caesar in distressed perplexity.

"O—do not trouble. I shall arrange all that," Caesar soothed him.

Pompey sighed with relief.

For the next few months relief was his prevailing feeling. It was a relief to have lost two enemies, to have Caesar and Crassus as thorns in one's foot withdrawn; it was almost a greater relief to have won a friend, a friend who was so capable, who could do all the awkward jobs Pompey disliked so skilfully and well. One felt safe, protected from all the tiresome small irritations, with Caesar on one's side; he repelled all awkward criticisms with such delightful jokes, thought Pompey gratefully.

With the united resources of all three men behind him, Caesar's canvass proved so acceptable that he seemed certain of the consulship, and there was even a likelihood of the other Popular candidate's election too. Alarmed, the Optimates collected a huge sum with which to bribe on their candidate's behalf, and to this fund even Cato contributed, so serious did the emergency seem. The Optimates' candidate, Bibulus, was married to Cato's daughter, but Cato's reputation stood too high for even Caesar to make many jokes about that. And indeed it was no joking matter for him; he was elected, with by far the highest number of votes, but the Optimates' fund gave him a hostile colleague.

In anticipation of Caesar's election, the Senate had already decreed that the provinces for next year were to consist merely of superintending the forests and pastures of Italy. Caesar had not the slightest intention of accepting this, but before attacking the matter of his own future he faithfully kept his promises to his two allies. He brought before the Senate a moderate and well-drawn bill for

allotting lands to Pompey's veterans; the Senate, led by the egregious Cato, rejected it without discussion. He brought before the Senate a bill for the ratification of Pompey's acts in Asia; the Senate consented to discuss this, but Cato tried to talk it out as he had done Caesar's candidature. This time, however, he had Caesar to deal with, and Caesar threatened to have him removed from the house by a lictor if he continued so to obstruct public affairs. At this the Senate, in support of Cato, rejected the bill in a violent scene, nor did it afford any better treatment to Caesar's proposal for a concession to the tax-farmers. Caesar's temper grew steadily worse. His measures were perfectly legal, perfectly polite, but the Optimates sat there staring at him with their long dull faces clenched in a stupid obstinacy, looking like a set of female goats, and declined to pass anything, however reasonable, if *he* proposed it. There were all kinds of small useful things which he had hoped to do, but what was the use? At this rate it would take him the whole year to satisfy Pompey and Crassus.

Since the Senate declined them, the measures must be brought before the assembly of the people. Caesar took them thither, and took Pompey and Crassus with him, whom he publicly asked whether they approved of the measures or no. The scene had been rehearsed beforehand, and they both stated their approval in suitable terms, whereupon Caesar with an air of pathos begged them to support him against the violence of the Senate. Pompey, who had just married Julia and was feeling boyishly happy and self-assured, cried out confidently:

"I will match sword with sword, and shall not leave my shield at home!"

To Caesar this seemed a silly but harmless remark, just the kind of emotional exaggeration to appeal to a crowd; so he smiled indulgently and let it pass. The Senate however resented it furiously, and professed to see in it all kinds of threats to the public peace. Cato repeated his old catchword:

“He shan’t come armed into the City while I’m alive,” with great effect, and raged against the marriage of Pompey and Julia in a way which upset and disconcerted Pompey, while Cicero made a biting allusion to the “three-headed monster” who now ruled Rome, in a court speech. At this Crassus, who since he had joined the coalition seemed restive and inclined to assert himself unnecessarily out of jealousy for Pompey, suddenly put his foot down and said something must be done to hold Cicero in check. Caesar, who despised Cicero as a politician but admired his beautiful eloquence, was loth to take strong measures; however, he agreed to help Clodius, since the trial Cicero’s bitter enemy, to a position whence he could usefully threaten attack. Clodius desired to become a tribune of the people, but to be eligible for this office he must be of plebeian birth, being in fact a patrician; he therefore sought adoption into a plebeian family. Adoption was a religious ceremony—but was not Caesar Pontifex Maximus? Within three hours of Cicero’s unfortunate allusion, Clodius was by law a plebeian, eligible for the office he desired.

That settled, Caesar with a sigh turned again to the business of Pompey’s requirements. He seemed to himself to be struggling through a thousand small threads which held him like a spider’s web; as fast as he broke one, another was spun. He began the business of a land law in the popular assembly—and was interrupted by his Optimates colleague, who stated that the religious omens were not auspicious for public assemblies that day. Caesar, compressing his lips in irritation at the childishness of the manœuvre, remarked drily that he too, as Pontifex Maximus, had observed the signs of the sky, and found them perfectly satisfactory. He continued the affair in hand; whereupon Cato sprang to the Rostra and began to harangue the assembled people on the irreligion, illegality and general vileness of their favourite consul. Those of the Senate who were present shouted applause, Caesar’s partisans replied angrily; there seemed

likely to be a considerable riot. Suddenly Caesar lost his temper completely. He shouted to his lictors to take Cato away and keep him in custody. The lictors made the arrest as ordered, and Caesar paused a moment, expecting Cato to ask the help of one of the tribunes, whose right it was to veto any business they disapproved. Cato, however, gave Caesar a sardonic and provoking smile, and allowed himself to be led away without appeal, continuing instead to finish his speech in an elaborate peroration. The people fell silent and looked on doubtfully; Cato's reputation stood altogether too high for them to feel comfortable at this incident. Caesar bit his lip, with an effort recovered his temper, and himself signed to a tribune to take action and release Cato. At this the other consul began a further vituperative speech. But he was not Cato; at Caesar's command some of Pompey's veterans, who had been brought up for just such an emergency, hustled him from the Forum; his lictors' fasces were broken and he himself bruised, but the people showed no disapproval, and proceeded quietly with business.

After this turbulent scene Caesar's colleague had some excuse for saying that he was in danger of his life. He shut himself up in his house and declined to attend the Senate, and many other Optimates, including Cato, followed his example. They thought they were being very patriotic and firm, not to say heroic, and Pompey, impressed by their attitude and by some sarcastic placards against the three which were found plastered on the walls of Rome, took on a rather apologetic air. But the people had a truer view of the Optimates' feeble behaviour; they joked scornfully that this year the two consuls were Caius Caesar and Julius Caesar, and passed both consuls' measures, as they said, with acclamation. Pompey's acts were confirmed (and a few land reforms tacked on to the bill by Caesar), his veterans satisfied; the tax-farmers received their desired concession. (Crassus by a skilful manipulation of shares made a nice sum

of money out of it.) Then at last a well-prompted tribune proposed that Caesar should have as province Nearer Gaul, with three legions, for five years, and the people were delighted to offer this fine command, so exceptional in duration, to their favourite. The Senate now in alarm voted Caesar Further Gaul in addition, with another legion; partly to avoid this too being ignominiously, and as they thought illegally, voted over their heads, and partly on the principle of giving too much sail to a ship in order to sink it. The Gauls were notoriously the fiercest and most implacable of Rome's enemies, and there were incidents in their mutual history which caused Romans to stir uneasily whenever Gauls were mentioned; moreover, for some years now Rome had been conscious of movement behind the Alps—something was going on there, something was being prepared. It was very proper that the matter should receive attention, and victories were of course to be hoped for; but if the commanding general should chance to be killed, or even suffer a severe defeat—well, how convenient that would be for the Senate!

Caesar, perfectly aware of this motive, smiled grimly and began to make his preparations. He chose his lieutenant-generals, his head engineer, his quartermaster-in-chief, and ordered his levies, then tried to arrange that during his absence affairs should remain fairly favourable for him in Rome. He secured the election of a suitably friendly consul for next year, and to clinch matters married his daughter—to Cato's fury. He staved off some of his creditors with Crassus' help, decided to take some with him as contractors; and gratified his chief political supporters by placing their relatives in unpaid positions (with lucrative opportunities) on his staff. There remained the question of his enemies. Pompey was supposed to be staying at home and keeping the City in order, but Crassus insisted that this was not enough.

"I won't be left with Cato and Cicero in Rome," said

Crassus peevishly. "Pompey can't manage things as you do, and those two are dangerous."

"I think I'll take Cicero with me," remarked Caesar with a smile. "He would amuse me in the evenings."

He accordingly offered Cicero a position on his staff. Cicero, however, was horrified at the notion of wandering about among barbarians with breeches and long hair, far from the City, far from books, at the side of a man whose politics he thought odious; and not perceiving Caesar's intention in the offer, refused it with vigour.

"Very well," said Caesar. "We'll put Clodius on to both of them."

His year of office was now drawing to its close, and he soon left the City, properly invested with proconsular power; he remained near Rome, however, until Clodius, now tribune, joyously and successfully carried through the people's assembly measures disposing of both Cicero and Cato. The latter was offered an appointment out of Italy which really consisted of nothing more than the taking over of a deposed king's crown treasure, and might well have been filled by a treasury clerk; Caesar enjoyed greatly the forcing of this subordinate position on the arrogant Cato by the people, whose power of appointment Cato totally disapproved. Against Cicero the proceedings of Clodius were less direct but more dangerous, for he carried a law for the prosecution of any magistrate who had put a citizen to death without trial. Cicero knew only too well that under this law he was guilty, for he had not forgotten, nor had he (unfortunately) allowed anyone else to forget, his proceedings against the Catiline conspirators in his famous consulship. He wailed in alarm—to Pompey, reminding him of his serviceable speech in favour of Pompey's Asian appointment; but Pompey hedged, sent polite messages, and finally left the City to avoid him; to Caesar, who merely repeated his offer of a position on his staff; to the Senate, who put on mourning in Cicero's honour but seemed unable to do anything more

useful. Cicero in despair banished himself to avoid a direct impeachment under the new law; and the way was clear for Caesar's departure to his province.

He went first to Servilia's little farm in the Apennines, whither she had come out from the City to bid him farewell. About a mile from the villa, his escort suddenly drew to one side; in a cloud of dust a horseman came towards them, galloping furiously. It was Brutus. He neither reined up nor offered a salute, though in the brief moment of his passage his eyes met Caesar's in a look of startled recognition. Caesar's attendants exclaimed at this lack of respect, but Caesar himself was distressed by the troubled grief on the young man's face, and as soon as he had greeted Servilia, he asked her what ailed her son. Servilia, who had evidently been weeping, explained that Cato insisted on taking Brutus with him to Cyprus to help in receiving the treasure.

"He hates accounts and money," she concluded, smiling sadly. "And—parting from me."

"I am very sorry," said Caesar with real regret. He considered for a moment the possibilities of extricating the lad from the distasteful mission, but did not see how it could be done without too openly publishing his own connection with Servilia.

"You look very tired, Caius," said Servilia presently.

"Tired! I am worn out with irritations," exclaimed Caesar. "The necessary manoeuvres in my consulship have been so confused, so intricate, so exasperating, that my head buzzes with them like one of your hives of bees."

"Would it not be better to keep a simpler course?" murmured Servilia. "It distresses me so much that, apart from giving you a province, the only result of your consulship, Caius, to which I have looked forward so long, has been the increase of faction in the State."

Caesar sighed. "Considering how strongly you disapprove of almost everything I do, my dear," he said ruefully: "It's really remarkable——" He broke off out of courtesy.

"How much I love you? Yes, it's remarkable," agreed Servilia with one of her rare smiles. "But I can't help seeing that you might be so much greater than you are. Would you have me otherwise?"

"The gods forbid!" cried Caesar. "If you knew how tedious my new wife is since she has taken to adoring me." Servilia's face changed. "Go on—go on," urged Caesar testily. "Say you are sorry for any woman who loves me."

"So I am," said Servilia. "But I am not," she added quietly, "sorry for any woman whom you love." In her heart she queried: "But is there such a one?" She did not speak this thought aloud, however, and Caesar gave her a smile which repaid her. Presently she rose. "Come and see the new foal," she said. Caesar followed her contentedly.

A few days later, Caesar's travelling carriage was rolling northward.

The sun was setting; in the west the sky brimmed with clear golden light, and even the quiet slender clouds were tinged with the golden hue. Caesar leaned back in the carriage, and drew in great breaths of the cool sweet air. He felt profoundly happy; ready, poised. At last he was clear of the dust and heat of Rome, clear of the mess and stress, the thwarted hopes, the false positions, the contradictory manoeuvres, the whole tortuous labyrinth of modern politics. Now he was making a fresh start, with fresh people, amid fresh scenes. Now he was no longer an ambiguous untrustworthy glib politician, up to his ears in debt, compromised in every direction; now he was the Republic's general, now he stood for Rome. He thought of the problems he still carried with him: the creditors, the self-seeking "friends," the young rakes packed off by their fathers, the Optimates' spies, who followed, chattering, dicing, plotting, in his train. Well, he would soon shake them off; one hard campaign would finish them. Let them behave or beware! They would find he was

a different Caesar, away in Gaul, out of reach of the Senate; he meant to be himself, to make no more compromises between means and ends, to do always what he really wished to do.

Slowly the sky faded, then darkened to a deep rich blue, against which the mountains ahead loomed softly black and the stars shone very large and clear. Now the road was rising sharply; the horses strained at the yoke, their heads sawing up and down, their hoof-beats slow and strong; trees rustled about Caesar, rocks stuck out their jagged heads, in the distance he could hear the heavy splash and roar of a mountain stream. He was reminded of that night, more than twenty years ago now, when he was running away from Sulla's proscriptions, and first met Servilia, first loved her. Ah, he was only a lad then; ambitious, clever, but ignorant, good and clean. What seas of filth he'd waded through since then! But Servilia, that first night, in the rain, with the curtain-rings of the litter rattling; her lovely pure grave face, her low voice, the baby asleep with its flushed cheek pressed against her breast. Yes, she was lovely; yes, she was noble; yes, she knew him almost as well as he knew himself, was right to be always so profoundly dissatisfied with his achievement. Well! There was plenty of time yet to make her proud of him, show himself in his full greatness, re-make Rome.

The carriage rolled on slowly towards Gaul.

●

“I AND THE ARMY ARE WELL . . .”

“HE IS DICTATING despatches, sir,” protested the young officer on duty, to Caesar’s second in command.

Labienus snorted crossly, puffing out his plump coarse-grained cheeks. To the young officer, who was a countryman by birth, he seemed just like a bad-tempered old bull his father had at home in Arpinum, short and strong and stocky, with a thick curl standing straight up above his seamed forehead, and black hair growing out of his nose and ears. Like the bull, he pawed the ground now impatiently.

“May I come in, Caesar?” he shouted in his loud pompous voice. “Titus Labienus, to report.”

“Certainly, certainly,” cried Caesar from within the tent, affably. “Come in, Labienus.”

The legate pushed aside the skin flap and entered. Caesar, with a fresh cut over his cheekbone, sat at work with two or three military secretaries, who in the lamplight all looked tired and dishevelled but very busy.

“I’ve been all around the camp myself, Caius Julius,” said Labienus.

“A very wise precaution in the circumstances,” commended Caesar.

“All seems safe,” continued Labienus. “I’ve put a special picket by the river.”

“Good, good,” murmured Caesar approvingly.

“I think we’ve finished them off to-day—shan’t need another battle,” said Labienus.

His voice asked a question, and Caesar replied firmly: “I believe so.”

At once Labienus brightened. "Yes, I think we have," he said in a patronising tone, as if he were giving his own opinion to a subordinate. "We shall have ambassadors from them, suing for peace, in a day or two. I suppose it's no use," he went on with a snort: "asking you not to pardon them, like you've done the others."

"No use at all," said Caesar calmly.

"Tribe after tribe you pardon," cried Labienus crossly, fixing Caesar accusingly with his little black eyes. "As fast as we beat them you pardon them. We shall have them all to beat again."

The words: "You mix your pronouns!" rose to Caesar's lips, but he repressed them; he repressed also the desire to explain once again his views on the settlement of Gaul. Instead he observed formally: "In the dangerous hour this afternoon, when victory had not yet declared herself, you deserved well of the Republic, Labienus. I was just mentioning your name when you came in." He made a slight gesture towards the tablets which lay in front of his secretaries.

Labienus gave a bashful smile of intense pleasure, mumbled confusedly, and withdrew, hanging his head.

"Fancy interrupting the general for that!" thought the officer on duty indignantly as he passed. Labienus, he reflected shrewdly, was a good soldier; his men trusted him and fought as he commanded, but they never did marvels for him as they did for—the young officer stopped, even in thought hesitating reverently before the name of the man he adored.

"Read to me what I have said so far," commanded Caesar.

"*Caius Julius Caesar, son of Caius, Imperator, to the consuls, praetors, tribunes and Senate, greeting,*" intoned the secretary. "If you are well, I am glad. I and the Army are well . . ."

Well, that's all for to-night, the gods be praised, thought Caesar, when the reading of the despatch was finished. He looked it over—it was arranged in the new way he liked, in columns—found nothing to alter in it, and appended his signature and seal. Stretching himself, he stepped to the door of his tent for a little fresh air.

The moon, hidden behind heavy grey clouds which sailed across the sky menacingly, gave a pallid uncertain light which was rather dismal. Down in the valley the river gleamed with a glossy wicked blackness; on its far bank huge trees rose, tall and stiff and straight, very close together, the outposts of an immense forest which seemed to stretch away right across Gaul. A chill wind sneaked down the hill, moaned in the unfamiliar hedges, set all the miles of trees a-rustle. This place feels a long way from Rome, thought Caesar; a little encouragement to the men is probably necessary. He sighed, for he was tired, but turning at once to the young officer, who was watching him adoringly, he ordered a horse. Twotoes was brought, as the others were exhausted from the long march; Caesar, pleased to see him, mounted and rode off alone cheerfully, wrapped in his purple general's cloak. His favourite tenth legion, which had as usual saved the battle that afternoon, was now busy completing the most exposed part of the camp fortifications; he rode towards the sound of picks and shovels, and sat his horse for a minute or two in silence, taking in the scene. The fitful moonlight glanced on bare arms and bronze blades, on bearded veterans working steadily, on sweating recruits doing their best but looking a little homesick, on bandages and stains of blood. Then Twotoes pawed slightly with his famous front hoof, and a centurion glanced over his shoulder and cried: "The general!" At once they all ceased work and stood gazing up at him. "That was a near thing this afternoon, Caius Caesar," ventured a young centurion in a respectful tone, taking a step or two forward.

"Near enough, Crastinus," agreed Caesar candidly, recognising the man as one he had promoted for behaving well in that raft affair in Spain. The man flushed deep with pleasure at being thus addressed by name, and on the faces of all the rest appeared the longing to have their name, too, remembered one day by Caesar. "So near, in fact," added Caesar with a smile, "that I'm sending the despatch to the Senate wreathed in laurel, lest they mistake it for a defeat."

This was a joke they well understood, and their hearty Roman laughter so rang across the hedges that the men in the next legion pricked up their ears; "Caesar's with them, I'll be bound," they murmured enviously. Caesar laughed too, then suddenly became serious.

"You fought well to-day, fellow-soldiers," he said, stately and calm as became a general. "Continue to deserve well of the Republic."

At this they all stood straight and saluted, very neat and trim; and Caesar acknowledged it with dignity, and rode on.

The joke about the laurels flew round the camp in front of him, and everywhere men roared with laughter, digging each other in the ribs. Caesar's sent the despatch about to-day's battle to the Senate wreathed in laurel, so they'll know for certain it wasn't a defeat! Hercules, that's a good one; that's like Caius. Did you see his horse with the divided hoof, my boy? That's why they call him Twotoes. It's said there was a prophecy when that horse was foaled, that its master should rule the world. Yes, it's true; for my uncle in the tenth. . . . Blow your uncle in the tenth. They say it came from Spain. No, it was a present from Servilia. O, didn't you know *that*? Let me tell you, my boy, our Caius knows how to look after himself, whether in peace or war. And after us too. Aye, that's true; he saved the twelfth this afternoon. They're badly cut up as it is. Aye, but there wouldn't have been one left at all, but for him. They say he's coming round to-night. Hope he comes this way, not just to that blasted

tenth. Did you see him with that Gaul this afternoon ? They aren't Gauls, they're Nervii. Same thing. Good fighters, anyhow. Aye ! The way they charged up this hill ! A near thing, a very near thing. You're right ; it doesn't do to say so to the youngsters, of course, but it was one of the nearest things I've ever been in. Catching us half making camp, the other half marching with the baggage ! Phew ! I never got my helmet on at all. Nor I—and then those confounded hedges. If Caesar hadn't rushed up and shouted at the front rank like that, and made them spread out and put some spirit in their fighting, the twelfth would have been done for. He was without a shield, too—took one from a man as he ran along. Not twenty yards from the enemy. All the same, in the end I think we pretty well finished them. Well, Caius has sent the despatch to the Senate wreathed in laurel. No ! What a lad !

The tread of Twotoes' hoofs was listened for with passion, and wherever Caesar went among his fifty thousand, faces were turned up to him alight with adoring devotion, perfect trust.

●

EACH WHITHER HIS NATURE LEADS HIM

“IF MADAM WOULD LEAN on me,” said the building contractor, offering his hand respectfully.

Julia, laying her fingers lightly on his tanned wrist, floated across the chasm with airy grace, her delicate little foot seeming hardly to touch the plank which bridged it. Pompey followed more heavily, limping a little, but pleased and eager. Julia’s stole fell back and her crocus curls stirred in the breeze; at this the contractor’s eyes flew fearfully from her to her husband, but Pompey merely gave an indulgent smile and said nothing. He had long since ceased to reprove Julia for such minor faults as wearing her hair uncovered, eating too much fruit, teasing Demetrius, and causing every man she met to fall in love with her—it was quite useless, and merely ruffled the golden surface of their happiness together. In the early days of their marriage he had once, for example, solemnly told her the traditional story of the senator who divorced his wife because he met her in the Forum bare-headed, but Julia—who was sitting on his knee at the time—merely threw her arms round his neck, laughed her delicious golden laughter in his ear, and observed: “But he wasn’t a great man like you, dear.” “Perhaps not,” Pompey had admitted, colouring between pleasure and embarrassment, “but great men are in the public eye and must be careful what they do.” “O no!” cried Julia, swinging one charming foot, from which an expensive slipper dangled carelessly: “Great men do what they like. Don’t they, Demetrius?” Demetrius with a rather bilious look blinked and said: “Yes,

madam." But Julia suddenly sat erect in Pompey's lap, put her hands on his shoulders and regarded him very earnestly, her blue eyes wide and anxious, her lower lip trembling, looking as she had looked that sad day in the country when she saw a kitten trodden by an ox: "Of course, darling, if you really wish," she began in an unhappy frightened little voice. "No, no!" said Pompey hastily. He gathered her warm fragrant childish body more closely in his arms, and rested his cheek on her curls while he listened to Demetrius; she lay very still, her heart beating in that swift eager rhythm, so much faster than his own, which always excited in Pompey a passionate tenderness; when he put back her hair gently and looked into her eyes, she gave him a smile so completely happy that it was the most flattering thing which had ever happened to the conqueror of sixteen kingdoms. It was incorrect to hold her on his knee while attending to business, of course, just as it was incorrect for her to fly about Rome with uncovered head and decline to pay calls because they bored her; but somehow Pompey felt that everything was right when Julia did it, she was a special person of a special kind—it would be wrong to restrain or limit her. He thought of all this now as she stood in the hall of this theatre he was building, amid marble blocks and planks and white dust and piles of stones, with clasped hands, looking eagerly around, making the whole scene somehow more real, more exciting. Of course all the workmen stopped plying their tools at once and stared at her, while a slow smile of intense appreciation crept over their sallow faces. Pompey was used to that look now, and did not dread it, for Julia, he knew, could suddenly be as coldly remote as a snow-capped mountain, drop slow icy words which froze a man's heart, if anyone spoke anything to her which seemed disloyal to her love for Pompey. She did this by nature and not by art, which made it all the more pleasing to her husband.

"This, where we are now standing," intoned the contractor, "is the main entrance to the theatre. There will be

a portico with sixteen marble columns—one for each kingdom subjugated by the donor.” He paused significantly, and Julia gave Pompey a flashing look of adoration. After all, *I am* the conqueror of sixteen kingdoms, thought Pompey, of course I am; I am one of the great men of Rome. He felt warm and soothed and happy. “You have already seen the theatre itself, with its tiers of stone seats,” continued the contractor, basking in the sunny air of Julia’s approval: “As you know, madam, this is the first theatre of stone to be built in Rome.”

Julia cried: “Yes! Yes!”

“To the right and left here,” continued the contractor, pointing, “are reception rooms, offices, and a hall suitable for meetings of the Senate. Perhaps you would like to see the plans?” he suggested, turning from one to the other, and fingering a roll he took from under his arm.

Pompey’s face began to cloud a little—he loathed plans and never understood them, and did not want to stand still looking over the man’s shoulder, breathing dust and garlic from his clothes. But Julia said seriously: “I would rather *you* explained the rooms,” fixing her clear eyes on the contractor’s, and the man, instead of being vexed and humiliated at the refusal to see his cherished documents, positively looked flattered as he tucked them away. Pompey sighed with relief; that was how things always went with Julia; she always said the right thing, and said it by impulse and not by calculation, so that it convinced.

“This,” explained the contractor happily, leading the way: “is a Senate hall, a Curia. It will be a great convenience for the Senate, for as it is without the City, meetings here could be attended by generals still holding their proconsular power.” He turned to Pompey as he said this, with an apologetic air, as if not expecting Julia to understand a matter so political; but she nodded gravely, and said:

“I know—like father has now.”

A shadow seemed to fall across Pompey; he frowned, and

the contractor, who had opened his mouth to utter congratulations on Caesar's Gallic victories, changed his mind and began to explain the proposed decorations of the hall instead. ("These high-up fellows and their politics!" he heard himself telling his wife that evening: "Never know where you are with them—have to watch your foot.") "At the far end, there," he concluded in a subdued respectful tone: "behind the curule chairs for the presiding magistrates, will stand a colossal statue of Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus."

"I hope it will be like him," said Julia, turning seriously to survey her husband.

"We've put a very good man on the job," said the contractor.

He tried to speak with his former warm enthusiasm, but there was a chill in the air. Julia felt it too. She gave her husband a sad little look, and said meekly:

"Shall we go home now?"

Pompey without speaking at once turned and made slowly for the entrance. He had become the stiff and reserved great man in public again, and the happy hopeful feeling of the earlier part of the interview had quite departed. Julia was sorry, and tried to cheer the contractor by a few graceful words of compliment on his work, as they left, but though the words were sincere enough her bright spirit was clouded by her husband's gloom, and the contractor, though he bowed respectfully, retained a sober and discouraged air.

"Darling, what is the matter?" murmured Julia as they waited for their escort outside the porch.

"Nothing, nothing!" said Pompey crossly, looking away.

He could not meet his wife's clear childish gaze and lie to her, and in truth the mention of Caesar's name had brought all his troubles back with a rush. Pompey loathed to be out of favour with anyone, he could not bear to be disapproved; to sustain the whole weight of the Optimates' disapproval of the "three-headed monster ruling Rome," as he did at

present, made him miserable. He had regarded himself all his life as an honest, good, law-abiding man—others might break laws and retain armies, never he—and now suddenly to find himself despised as a man acting unconstitutionally and against the interests of the State, to be the subject of satiric placards and rude scrawls on walls, to find when he dined out that only Crassus and rather disreputable Populars had been asked to meet him, instead of good old senatorial families of really high rank, to be received coldly in the Senate, accused of banishing the Republic's best men, taunted with his "dynastic" alliance with Julia—it was intolerable! He forgot the benefits Caesar had conferred on him—for though, trying to be fair, he reminded himself frequently of the wretched position he had occupied before the formation of the triumvirate, now that he had escaped from it he could not believe it had ever been as uncomfortable as it had seemed—and remembered only the ingratitude he had been obliged to show towards Cicero. Cicero, who had made a magnificent speech in favour of Pompey's Asiatic appointment, Cicero, who had always been his friend, always tried to reconcile him with the Senate. Pompey had not wanted to banish Cicero—no, indeed! reflected Pompey angrily; that was all due to Crassus; he had simply been obliged to yield. He experienced a most uncomfortable twinge of conscience whenever he thought of Cicero; a splendid orator, a fine writer, a worthy honest man in spite of various little oddities and weaknesses, which in any case were less memorable when he was away, a man devoted to the State—really one could not but feel ashamed at having been a party to banishing such a man. It was all Crassus' fault, thought Pompey again angrily; and look how Crassus was behaving now! Everyone knew that abominable rip Clodius was under Crassus' special protection, and Clodius was behaving as disagreeably as possible, not only to the Senate—that was natural if uncomfortable—but to Pompey. Not only did he pass the most shocking "popular" laws

restoring privileges to political clubs which the Senate had long since removed as dangerous, not only did he use the opportunities of bribery thus available to form bands devoted to himself with which he paraded about the streets and besieged magistrates who opposed him in their own houses, not only did he thus disturb the peace of Rome possibly in the triumvirate's interests, he actually turned these weapons against Pompey ! He egged his bands on to insult Pompey in the streets, to throw all the odium of the triumvirate's proceedings on Pompey, pretend that Pompey alone wanted and wielded supreme power. Only yesterday, for example, when Pompey was walking through the Forum, limping a little on his bandaged leg, one of Clodius' clubmen, pointing at the white bandage, shouted sarcastically: " Why does he wear his crown on his leg ? " The laughter which greeted this sally had a threatening angry ring, for the mere mention of a crown, of kingly power, touched every Roman's nerves in their tenderest spot. It was all due to Crassus, of course; and if it continued, Pompey should complain of him to Caesar. But Pompey the Great, complain to Caesar ! What a position ! And suppose Clodius after all was acting on instructions from Caesar ? This thought made Pompey desperately uneasy. There was another reflection which increasingly visited him, equally comfortless; Caesar away in Gaul seemed already to be winning the most remarkable victories, while Pompey idled away his time in Rome, doing nothing, letting his laurels fade. Added to all this was a deep, secret feeling which Pompey would not admit even to himself because he thought it too absurd, too unworthy of a Roman. It was a kind of jealousy of Caesar as regarded Julia. Julia adored her father and adored her husband; but Pompey had never quite dared to ask his wife which of the two she adored the more, which of the two she thought the greater, which she would choose if she had to choose between them. Sometimes when Julia mentioned her father, Pompey felt a fierce sexual anger rise within him,

and he possessed her with terrible passion, determined to make her all his own, take her quite away from Caesar. He had felt this mad and unworthy feeling just now in the theatre; conquering it as he was carried home in his litter, ashamed of it, he decided to be particularly mild and calm with Julia to-day, and write a friendly congratulatory letter to his father-in-law.

In the atrium Demetrius awaited them, frowning and fidgeting. Pompey sighed. Demetrius seemed more and more of a slave-driver every day at present to his irritated patron, for he disapproved of the neglect of business involved in Pompey's happy excursions with Julia, and was always dragging him back from bliss by some disagreeable news which required attention. He had disapproved of their visit to the country yesterday on the excuse of seeing Pompey's children, and would certainly disapprove of their loitering to visit the theatre on their way home, instead of returning in time for Pompey to attend the Senate. Demetrius rushed forward to meet his patron now, but when he reached Pompey's side he seemed suddenly to hesitate, and stood beside him in silent agitation.

This was so unlike his usual eagerness to hint rebuke by breaking news that Pompey felt genuinely alarmed.

"What is it now?" he said in a haughty peevish tone, his heart sinking.

Demetrius explained, with a diffidence quite unusual, that last night—he did not say, "during your absence," and Pompey felt still more certain that the matter was serious—the abominable Clodius had stolen away, by a trick, one of the princes Pompey had brought home captive from Asia, an Armenian named Tigranes, whom he had entrusted to a friend to keep in free custody. Clodius, dining at the house, had asked to have the Eastern prince brought out on show; his request was complied with and Tigranes allowed, as often before, to mingle freely with the guests; but this time when the guests had gone Tigranes had vanished too. It was

said, concluded Demetrius, looking down, that Clodius had sent him away in the night, by sea.

The freedman's expectation of his patron's wrath was fully justified, for Pompey's neck swelled as he listened and the blood rushed to his face.

"By Hercules!" he shouted in a strong angry voice, stamping up and down the hall. "He goes too far! He shall pay for this! He goes too far!"

The incident was certainly nicely calculated to bring the maximum irritation and ridicule on Pompey. He had brought Tigranes to Rome to figure in his Asiatic triumph, but had carried out his previous vow not to have his captives killed on that occasion. This was very well; his mildness pleased Pompey and did not displease, though it slightly perplexed, Rome; but the fact was that, the triumph over, Pompey had no idea how to dispose of Tigranes. To send him back to Asia to stir up more trouble seemed absurd, to kill him in cold blood impossible. But what *could* be done with a saffron-coloured prince of supple manners and intriguing disposition? Pompey did not know, and in spite of Demetrius' urgings, let the matter slide. And now, this! Pompey could not endure the slightest hint of a blemish in his Asiatic proceedings; they were his life-work, his consolation, his pride. To have set Tigranes free himself, after preserving his life, might have been a stroke of policy, to have him set free by an enemy was intolerable: Pompey would get credit neither for good nature nor for decision. How the people would laugh! How the Senate would jeer!

"This is the work of Crassus!" cried Pompey furiously. He drew his thick eyebrows together in a menacing glare, and looked more like the Conqueror of the East than Julia had ever seen him. She gazed up at him admiringly. "Or," added Pompey, lowering his voice but still panting with rage, "of Caesar."

"O, I'm sure it isn't father," said Julia simply.

The two men turned their eyes on her; they would not

deign to ask a political question of a woman, but yet gazed at her enquiringly.

"Father would never do anything to lower Rome in the eyes of a barbarous nation," answered Julia. "And what would he gain by this silly trick? If he had not meant to be true friends with you, Cnaeus," she went on in her clear childish tones: "He wouldn't have consented to our marriage."

Pompey said nothing, and continued to glare at her; but in his heart he felt that this was true. All his muddled but intense feelings on his whole present position—his uneasiness beneath the Senate's disapproval, his angry discomfort under the pricks of Clodius, his dissatisfaction with his own behaviour, which seemed in parts unworthy of a good man and an honest citizen, his dislike of Crassus, his uncertainty about Caesar—suddenly rose up and fought tumultuously in his mind, and as a result he cried abruptly:

"I shall work for the recall of Cicero!"

"Now is the time for all good men to join together for the sake of the Republic!" sang Julia in a very good imitation of the orator's booming tones.

"Be quiet, Julia," said Pompey uncomfortably. "These matters do not concern you."

"It concerns me when you look so worried," said Julia, pouting. She stood on tiptoe and delicately drew one soft finger across her husband's frowns.

"Now, now!" objected Pompey, putting up his hand to draw hers down.

Julia, exclaiming mutinously and slightly stamping one foot, seized his wrist and continued the stroking process with her other hand. Involuntarily Pompey's features relaxed; his smile was but a wan and unhappy one, but the delighted Julia clapped her hands triumphantly and danced up and down.

"Run away, child," commanded Pompey. "I have an affair of State to consider."

His tone was fond but sombre, and Julia's glee was at once subdued to concern again.

"Why don't you write to father about it?" she urged, with an earnest loving look. "Let *him* do it, and you come into the country with me."

"Run away!" repeated Pompey in a more cheerful tone. "Be off, little goose!"

Julia blew him a kiss and danced up the stairs.

Demetrius, watching, knew that presently—in a few days or a few months or a few years, when Pompey had worried and twisted and turned and tormented himself—he would take the advice he wished to take now, though he did not know it, and write to Caesar. Demetrius sighed; he had heard the Tigranes news last night and not slept a wink in consequence, and was feeling old and worn.

"Clodius will oppose the return of Cicero with every nail," he could not resist saying in a disagreeable tone.

"Well, we can find another tribune to oppose him, I suppose?" said Pompey testily.

"O, no doubt," agreed Demetrius with another sigh.

A week or two later, therefore, he dutifully introduced into Pompey's study a tribune-elect by the name of Milo, who, he said suavely, had it much at heart to counter the iniquities of Clodius, and would do all against him that an honest man could. Pompey, handing the book he was reading to a slave to be rolled, sighed as he looked at Milo; like all the other tribunes of the people Pompey had employed, Milo had an abundance of dark greasy hair and a pale flat face like a frog, only his hair seemed blacker and greasier and longer, his face paler and flatter and more batrachian, than any of the rest. Milo was sweating strongly, and had probably just chewed an olive to take the smell of wine from his breath. It occurred to Pompey to wonder sadly what the great tribunes of the past, men who had won precious liberties for the people by a firm defiance of the Senate at the risk of their lives, men of austere habit and lofty thought, such as the Gracchi, would think of their degenerate descendants to-day, if Milo and Clodius were to be taken as

specimens. He sighed a little—and turned to the matter in hand, asking Milo if he were indeed ready to combat Clodius.

“That snake, that spawn of evil,” shouted the demagogue at once, his large red mouth opening and shutting rapidly, as if moved by strings: “That mass of crimes, that pernicious animal——”

“Well, well; I am not a street-corner meeting,” said Pompey testily.

“Our Milo here is skilled in the gladiatorial art,” put in Demetrius. “He is well known in all the gladiators’ schools, and keeps a considerable private band himself.”

“Indeed,” said Pompey.

“But his activities are somewhat hampered at present,” continued Demetrius smoothly. “Family losses, bad harvests—he is a countryman, a native of Lanuvium—have made him a little—out, as we say.”

At this common expression for debt Milo gave a hoarse guffaw, which Demetrius followed by a refined titter. Pompey scowled; he disliked this part of the proceedings exceedingly, and thought Demetrius might have spared him. It seemed to him suddenly now that he had been bribing tribunes all his life, but he had never acquired the knack of it, and never would. Looking down his nose he mumbled now a few vague unfinished sentences about needing to keep in contact with the tribunician bench, in order to ascertain the general feeling of the tribunician bench——

“Now look here, Cnaeus Pompeius,” interrupted Milo in a familiar confidential tone, leaning forward close to Pompey. “What you want, as I understand it, is someone to point their middle finger at Clodius, as it were.” Pompey winced at this vulgarity, but perforce nodded. “Well, I’m your man,” said Milo cheerfully. “We’ve no use for patricians who get adopted and run opposition street-gangs, where I come from, no, by the gods! And look at the way he banished Cicero! That worthy man, that——” he hesitated, his supply of praise not being equal to his invective, and

looked at Demetrius to help him out. "Well, anyway," concluded Milo, getting no help from either of his auditors, but not feeling its want greatly: "I'm your man for the Clodius job. But of course it'll cost you something. Gladiators can't be kept up for nothing—you'd be surprised, Cnaeus Pompeius, how much they cost, you would indeed."

"I don't wish any resort to violence unless it's absolutely necessary," said Pompey.

"Of course you don't!" agreed Milo heartily. "Why should you? You want a discreet respectable agent to help forward your schemes for the good of the State. I understand, I understand perfectly. But it's no use trying to fight Clodius with a wooden sword, you know. And an armed band, properly equipped and disciplined, isn't kept for a few sesterces. No, Cnaeus Pompeius, it isn't, and I should be deceiving you if I said otherwise."

Now that the actual word for money had been introduced, the interview followed the customary lines, and Milo became Pompey's instrument for the return of Cicero. Pompey did not communicate his purpose to Crassus, but he wrote to Caesar, who replied promptly and affably that no doubt Cicero would find himself guided in politics, after his return home, by the great general who had used his influence to secure that return. Pompey and Cicero, and Cicero's friends and relatives in Rome, forthwith began a series of communications designed to say this without exactly saying it, and in the following January Cicero's case was brought before the Senate. Clodius, however, interrupted the session by bringing into the Forum a band of gladiators he had managed to borrow; these fellows growled and shouted so menacingly outside that the Senate took fright and disbanded. Meanwhile the zealous Milo brought up his own gladiators to hold the others in check; the supporters of both men among the populace rushed to the scene; insults were shouted, stones hurled, blows struck, and a riot ensued which proved one of the bloodiest yet known in the City's history.

"The Tiber's full of corpses," said Demetrius, narrating the finish of the affair to Pompey that night at dinner. "They say the very sewers are choked with blood."

Pompey felt the couch on which he reclined suddenly tremble; the movement came from Julia beside him, who had shuddered uncontrollably. Pompey looked at her in tender solicitude; her lovely face was a mask of anguish, her cheek blanched, her blue eyes dark with horror.

"They're wiping the pavement up with sponges," concluded Demetrius with relish.

"Enough! Enough!" commanded Pompey, as Julia gave a cry. "Such tales are not for women's ears."

This prohibition restricted dinner-table conversation from the topics of the day for some time to come, for fires and riots became Rome's frequent fare. Clodius and Milo soon forgot for which principles they were supposed to be fighting, if indeed they had ever known at all, and the matter became one of personal strife between them. Clodius with his aristocratic appearance, his languid drawl, his refined villainies, had a romantic attraction for one section of the populace, while Milo went in for the homely-honest-countryman-with-no-nonsense-about-him style, and made this licensed bluntness serve him well. But Clodius' term of office was just over, while Milo's was just begun, and so presently, protected by Milo's bands, the Senate passed a bill authorising Cicero's return, and urged all good citizens to attend the people's assembly on the day set for it to be confirmed. Pompey actually journeyed out to his veterans' settlements to urge them to come in and vote; Milo had Lanuvium in his (or rather in Pompey's) pocket; honest men had always been indignant at the good Cicero's exile; the orator's return was triumphantly voted. He returned joyously to Rome, received a tremendous welcome, made an agreeable speech of thanks to the people, but, blinded as usual by his conceit, took a rather peevish and scolding tone in the Senate which offended many.

Meanwhile Pompey found the news from Gaul increasingly distasteful. Caesar's victories were passing beyond a joke. At first in Rome they were hardly credited—how could a dissipated dandy who'd hardly ever held a sword in his hand, do the things he was alleged to be doing?—but Caesar's despatches were too consistent to be disregarded, and presently officers on furlough confirmed the astonishing truth. Demetrius thereupon began to urge on his patron, whenever he found him without Julia, the really pressing need to secure some military appointment to equalise his prestige with Caesar's growing power. Pompey bestirred himself to find one. Luckily for him corn suddenly became dear and scarce. Nobody quite knew why this happened; the Populars said it was the usual gross mismanagement of the Senate, the Senate said it was due to the speculators (hinting at Crassus), and Crassus hinted that it was Pompey. Pompey was so indignant at this accusation that he would not come forward and boldly demand the wide powers, including a mandate to settle the affairs of Egypt, which he really desired, but accepted the minor appointment which was offered him by the Senate on the proposal of Cicero.

The moment the appointment was passed he became, as usual, extremely happy; to feel that he was doing right, serving the State, yet forwarding his own career, was nectar and ambrosia to Pompey. The map of the Mediterranean was all in his head, ready to be used; he sailed energetically about through winter storms to Sicily and Sardinia, earning everyone's applause and approval, feeling content in his every pore and forgetting his jealousy of Caesar. He was helped in this by the fact that Julia was with child; she was all his now, he felt, her father had nothing of her, and the three could settle down into the ordinary friendly relations proper to their mutual position.

From this it was depressing to return to the growing turbulence of Rome. The elections, which ought to have been held months ago, had been repeatedly postponed on account of

rioting and disorder, and were just about to take place. Clodius was again seeking office; Milo, Cicero, Pompey and the Optimates, for their very various reasons, were all determined to prevent him. Pompey called up some veterans, put Milo in funds, and went to the voting booths with a large band of followers and a grim air. Julia wept when he bade her farewell in the dark and chilly dawn, flung her arms round his neck and begged him not to go. Pompey, mindful of her condition, could not be rough with her, and when he tried gently to unloose her clasp, she clung the tighter and sobbed hysterically, actually bedewing his silver breastplate with her tears. "Now, now," urged Pompey gently, touched by the clear soft drops, which were somehow very like his Julia: "See what you have done!" At this Julia between remorse and anguish wept the more. Pompey sent for a cloth and, putting it into her hot little hand, bade her wipe the tears away. The action steadied her, and she was quiet, though drooping and tremulous, when Pompey at length set forth. On his way to the voting ground Pompey bethought himself to send a message for her grandmother to keep her company.

The disorder of the day was even worse than he had feared. Clodius had actually armed some runaway slaves in the attempt to overawe the voting, a thing in itself deeply repugnant to the feeling of Rome. Milo's gladiators and Pompey's soldiers were angry at being asked to contend with slaves; there were insults and blows; in the middle of this, one of Pompey's officers suddenly shouted a warning and sprang in front of his general—a slave was creeping through the crowd with uplifted dagger towards him. Pompey's soldiers with a howl of rage fell upon the man, Clodius charged to his rescue, and there was a hot and angry fight before Clodius, outnumbered, was beaten off. As the occasion was supposed to be civil and peaceful, Pompey wore a toga over his armour; he now perceived with disgust that it was thickly stained with blood. Retiring to one of the voting

booths, he threw it off and bade Demetrius fetch him a change of wear.

"We could fetch you one from a house near by, sir," suggested the keeper of the booth.

"No—no," said the fastidious Pompey distastefully. "He can go and come within the hour."

Demetrius, not too pleased—he was growing a little fat and sluggish with the years—set off with a guard immediately. He puffed and panted along as swiftly as he could, for the matter was of some importance; Pompey's presence on the voting field was very necessary, yet if he appeared in armour alone, as if ready for a fight, constitutional objection could well be taken, and insulting remarks made of the kind to which Pompey was particularly susceptible. The moment he reached the house, therefore, Demetrius rushed in, crying loudly:

"To me ! Quickly !"

The slaves of the household all came hurrying to the call, and Demetrius displayed the bloodstained garment. While fresh gear was fetched, he stood amongst them, narrating the day's violent story in answer to their excited questions. Suddenly his wife touched his arm. He looked up, and saw Julia standing in the colonnade of the second floor, listening intently. Her breast panted, her eyes were wide and staring, a look of fearful expectation contorted her blanched face. Behind her Aurelia was approaching with an anxious look, leaning on her ebony stick.

The slaves fell silent and gazed up at the ladies respectfully.

Slowly Julia extended her hand and pointed at the bloodstained toga. She did not speak, but her eyes implored.

"Yes, this has been indeed a bloody day, madam," began Demetrius, shaking out the toga with gusto. "No, no !" he cried suddenly, running towards the stairs : "Madam ! No ! Cnaeus Pompey's quite safe ! He's unhurt ! He's well !"

But Julia with a wild high scream had thrown up her arms and sunk to the ground.

"Fool ! Fool !" cried Aurelia, throwing away her stick to kneel beside her grand-daughter. "You fool, Demetrius ! You made her think her husband dead ! The physician, quick, man ! Quick !"

She chafed the young wife's hands; Julia lay still and seemed to be breathing quietly, and Aurelia began to hope that she had taken no serious harm. The hope was vain; Julia's blue eyes opened suddenly in a look of surprise which changed at once to fearful anguish; she screamed again frantically, drew up her knees, and rolled in an agony of pain.

"A miscarriage," muttered Aurelia. "What a disaster !"

"Cnaeus !" cried Julia, raising herself from the ground on one elbow. "Cnaeus !"

"My child, he is busy with the Republic's affairs," Aurelia told her firmly, taking her hand. "You must be a Roman wife and bear your trouble alone; we cannot send for him."

Julia moaned and sank back to the ground. "Cnaeus !" she whispered despairingly.

The frightened slaves came and lifted her gently to her bed.

When at length Pompey—Clodius having in spite of his efforts been elected—came home after sunset, the affair was all over and Julia's hope of her child at an end. Frightened by the fearful results of his earlier thoughtlessness, Demetrius had taken pains to assure his patron that Julia lived, before beginning his tale of her illness, so that Pompey had hardly received a sufficiently serious impression of the affair, and was horrified to see his wife lying white, exhausted, trembling, almost, he would have thought if the physician had not assured him to the contrary, dead.

"My darling, what have they been doing to you ?" he cried in anguish, tenderly taking her limp little hand, in which he was horrified to feel the blood beating very slowly, as if it could hardly stir at all.

"Cnaeus!" whispered Julia. The effort to speak made her tremble, and Aurelia murmured in his ear: "Don't let her talk." "Cnaeus, don't leave me," whispered Julia.

"No, no, no!" Pompey assured her, tears in his kind brown eyes.

Julia's pale lips framed the word: "Promise."

"I promise, my little love," said Pompey, kneeling heavily beside her and putting his lips to her cheek. "I won't leave you. If I have to leave Rome," he added, thinking of that Egyptian command for which he still yearned, "you shall go too."

Julia nestled her head against his shoulder and sighed contentedly.

The Egyptian appointment—it was an affair of restoring a Ptolemy who had quarrelled with his people to his throne—was brought before the Senate again in the new year. The Optimates were loth to entrust a command in Egypt, a country with a situation and a corn supply both so important, to any general, who might so easily use them to the disadvantage of the City, but especially to Pompey—there were too many soldiers under the command of the "three men" already, they felt. The same argument applied to Crassus, whose claims as a general, besides, were not taken seriously nowadays, though he seemed to hanker after a military appointment. The Optimates therefore invoked religious aid, and a very suitable oracle was found to declare the sending of any army to Egypt inauspicious. Pompey's officers, and some sections of Senate and people, desired the appointment for Pompey greatly, but they were hampered, as always, by Pompey's obstinate reserve—what could be done with a man who, having lost the Senate's confidence by accepting a position of unlawful influence, instead of firmly stating his demands looked down his nose and remarked with haughty diffidence that it must be just as the Senate

wished? In these circumstances, when an argument arose in the Senate as to which of two propositions on the Egyptian subject should be put to the vote first, the Optimates were glad enough to let the matter slide off into this side-issue, and the session was "talked out" without any vote being taken at all. Pompey and Crassus were both furious; and making no allowances for the element of chance which had entered into the affair and the natural indirectness of democratic methods, each accused the other of underhand manœuvres, and wondered uneasily if the other had the support of Caesar. Crassus was rendered still further uneasy by the streams of gold which began to flow from Gaul—uneasy, and envious too; uneasy because Caesar would be out of his power soon if he repaid his debts at this rate, envious on account of all that gold. Crassus must and would have a provincial command if all that gold were there to be extracted. His lifelong smouldering hatred of Pompey was fanned to a blaze by this Egyptian disappointment, and soon Pompey began to find Clodius less tolerable than ever. Clodius and Milo began a series of lawsuits against each other for wrongful practices at elections, with special reference to gladiators; they were both so guilty that the proceedings were a farce, and Pompey disliked very much the idea of appearing in court and speaking for Milo, on which nevertheless all his friends, and even Cicero, insisted. Demetrius composed a good speech for him, however, and he learned it by heart and recited it for practice to Julia, who was slowly convalescing.

"Say it like this, darling," urged Julia. "'Is there a *law* in Rome—to prevent *citizens*—attending their *friends*—to the polling-booth?' Try to sound as though of course you know there isn't such a law, and pause at the end and smile a little."

Pompey, laughing, obeyed, and presently began to find a real interest in the business of speech-making, and determined to do it successfully.

"The conqueror of the East turns orator," he said to Julia, laughing at himself in order to be reassured.

"Why not?" demanded Julia, and her husband had the reassurance he desired.

The day of the trial came, and Pompey went off hopefully. When the time came for him to make his speech in praise of Milo's character, he rose with dignity, made a real effort to overcome his nervousness, and spoke his first two sentences exactly as Julia had taught him. He was rewarded by a look of relief on Milo's flat pale face, and a corresponding fury on the aquiline features of Clodius. Pleased with himself, Pompey proceeded to his next remark, but suddenly Clodius gave his toga a peculiar shake which was obviously a pre-arranged signal, and some forty or fifty fellows behind him raised a loud concerted cry. Pompey in surprise paused a moment, and Clodius cried out loudly:

"Who scratches his head with one finger?"

He shook his toga again, and the rabble behind him sang out: "Pompey!"

Pompey turned red, for he knew he was addicted to this innocent habit.

"Who starved the people to get a corn commission?"

"Pompey!"

"Who wanted to be sent to Egypt?"

"Pompey!"

"But who do *you* want to go?"

"Crassus!" shouted the group in unison.

The people, who had listened to all this with their mouths open, now began to laugh, and applauded heartily.

Rage, disappointment, Julia, Crassus, Caesar, all rushed through Pompey's mind; drawing himself erect, he resumed his speech, and began to recite it as he had planned. Since he knew it by heart, he was never at a loss what to say next, and at times his air of dignity commanded silence. But Clodius was not to be quelled; he continued his game of question and answer at every favourable opportunity, and

those of the audience who agreed with him began to join in the play.

"Who wanted to be sent to Egypt?"

"Pompey!" roared the mob with glee.

"And who do you want to go?"

"Crassus!"

Pompey was conscious of Crassus sitting there motionless, his finger in the palm of his hand, his eyes cast discreetly down, his inscrutable smile just curving his lips. Sick with hate and mortification, Pompey nevertheless continued his speech to its appointed end—partly out of pride, and partly because he could not put two words of his own together to close it earlier. When he had finished at last, up rose Clodius; the friends of Pompey and Cicero naturally received him very ill, and the proceedings were presently cut short by one of the riots now becoming so customary. The Senate was promptly summoned to a meeting in the Senate-house; Pompey with what dignity he could command went home.

He was too angry even to visit Julia, and paced up and down his study alone, in furious silence. He was in a maddening position of impotence and ridicule; attacked by the extreme Populars in the person of Clodius, disapproved by the extreme Optimates, whose distrust had been renewed by the Egyptian question, with no party of his own, it seemed, to support him, he did not know where to turn, but raged against everyone indiscriminately. It came to him now, as bitter memories are wont to come when the mind is weakened to receive them, that a thanksgiving of fifteen days had been decreed last year in honour of Caesar's victories. Fifteen! And Pompey for his finest Asian success had had but ten. It was intolerable. Pompey, raging, decided to hire many more gladiators for Milo.

Cicero also went home, and paced his peristyle—incomplete, for his house had been razed by Clodius during his exile—thoughtfully. He had characteristically refrained from going to the Senate this afternoon because he did

not wish to be obliged either to attack or defend Pompey, or minimise his own influence by remaining silent, if a discussion arose on the day's proceedings; and he now gave himself to a very serious consideration of the state of public affairs. It was plain to him that two at least of the "three men," Pompey and Crassus, were completely at variance, while Caesar was far from Rome; it seemed the moment for the Optimates to throw off their yoke, and reassert the liberty of the constitution in its pristine purity. How could it best be done?

"Decree that the appointments of Caesar and Pompey are both illegal, and impeach them," barked Terentia, who had come out to speak of their daughter's engagement with her husband, and remained—to Cicero's regret—to discuss public affairs.

Cicero sighed as he looked at her and saw a thin, tough, much too active woman, whose aristocratic features, once so much admired by the rising young advocate from Arpinum, were now as sharp as her tongue. He did not forget that she had urged him to the execution of Catiline's colleagues.

"It would be most impolitic to proceed to such extremes," replied Cicero soothingly.

"Why?" snapped Terentia. "Cato would do it if he were here."

This annoyed Cicero. "Cato does not enjoy the confidence of the Senate to the same extent as I do," he said.

"It will have to be settled some time," pursued Terentia, keeping firmly to the subject in hand. "Best take a strong hand to it now."

"You are always in favour of strong hands, my dear," murmured Cicero ironically. "The impolitic use of the strong hand has reduced the Optimates to the position they now occupy."

"Nonsense," said Terentia.

At this moment—fortunately, thought her husband—she was called within by the visit of a friend, and Cicero was

left to continue his meditations alone. Essentially a man of peace and negotiation, Terentia's fighting advice made him positively blench and shudder; far the best course, he decided, would be to increase the differences between the triumvirs to the breaking point, gently detach Pompey and attach him to the Optimates. Cicero always felt comfortable, at home, with Pompey; their views, he felt, were essentially in accord, moderate, sensible, reasonable views. Whenever Cicero had been in Pompey's company, he always felt sure that Pompey was a good servant of the Republic and had no dangerous ambitions. Cicero decided now to drive a wedge between Pompey and his present associates, if and as opportunity offered.

Delicately, skilfully, he trod this appointed path; and presently had so far succeeded that he ventured to take an open step against Caesar. He proposed to put Caesar's land law up for re-consideration, a month hence in the Senate; the sections which concerned the settlement of Pompey's veterans were, however, not to be brought in question, and the whole business was tacked on to the grant of money to Pompey for this year's corn supply. After a noisy debate in the Senate, Cicero got his way, and Pompey prepared, it was said in Rome, to leave at once for Sardinia on the business of the corn. As Cicero's brother was acting as Pompey's lieutenant-general in Sardinia in this matter, Cicero wished to call on Pompey before his departure, but Pompey, as usual, was out of Rome, dallying in a suburban villa with Julia.

"O ! Julia !" commented Cicero sardonically when he heard this, rolling his eyes. He was not well acquainted with Julia, thought of her merely as Caesar's daughter, and, as he jolted along the Via Appia in his litter that evening to call on Pompey, wished heartily she were divorced. "It would be well, perhaps, to put the idea of that into his head," reflected Cicero.

When he reached the house the orator was kept waiting

a few minutes, during which wine was offered him, then Pompey came into the room where he had been shown, hurriedly. Cicero thought this very informal, but the informality of a great man was after all, he reflected, a pleasing sign of intimacy, and Pompey's greeting had a simple dignity of its own. Though he seemed somewhat preoccupied, he received the orator kindly, and promised he would send his brother home, the moment he himself arrived in Sardinia.

"And that will not be very long now, I hear?" murmured Cicero interrogatively.

Pompey started, then seemed to collect himself, and answered: "Yes, I leave in a few days." He paused, then added stiffly: "I shall sail from Pisae."

Cicero felt a slight surprise that Pompey, who was supposed to be fond of the sea, should take a tiresome journey so far north by land in order to save himself a few hours on the voyage to Sardinia, but the matter seemed of no importance, and he did not take it up. Instead, he remarked in a casual tone:

"I too leave on a journey to-morrow."

Pompey started again. "A journey?" he said.

It was so evident that he wished to know where but did not think it courteous to ask, that Cicero, appreciating his delicacy, went on: "A tour of my small properties southward—to Arpinum, thence to Pompeii and Cumae."

Pompey's relief at the direction of Cicero's tour was so marked that Cicero felt hurt. "Was he afraid that I should offer him my company?" he thought. The next moment, however, Pompey spoke so kindly of the betrothal of the orator's daughter that Cicero's wounded vanity was soothed to rest. He replied suitably, and did not fail to mention the health of Pompey's three children by Mucia—partly from genuine kindness of heart, but chiefly in opposition to the interests of Julia. The subject of domestic relations having thus entered the conversation, Cicero decided to use his

opportunity to the full. "For if the gods should make you happy with other offspring," he continued, using an inflated diction to mask the delicacy of the subject, "I am certain that you would not change your kindness towards your elder children, Cnaeus Pompeius."

"Naturally not," agreed Pompey stiffly.

"And it is to be hoped that a change of connection will bring you this further happiness," continued Cicero. As Pompey looked merely bewildered at this, Cicero explained his meaning by adding suavely: "Your true friends—of whom I hope I may count myself as one—would be happy to see you allied by marriage as well as politically, to the Optimates, Magnus."

"What!" cried Pompey, throwing up his head. His voice and mien were suddenly those of the Conqueror of the East, and Cicero at once retreated.

"I only repeat what I have heard on other lips," he explained hastily.

"You will oblige me by never mentioning the matter again," said Pompey in a commanding tone. "I have no thought of divorce."

"Your wishes are my commands," said Cicero suavely. ("But he will come round to it all the same," thought Cicero, who in his heart so longed to divorce his own wife that he felt everyone else must wish it too.) He proceeded to elaborate a few compliments about Pompey's handling of the corn supply, which he said had earned, and would earn again, the marked approval of the Senate. These compliments served to glide away from the awkward subject of the divorce, and also to hint again at the reconciliation of Pompey with the Optimates. Then, since he had already secured what he wanted about his brother, the orator took formal leave, well satisfied.

"But why was he so anxious about my journey?" mused Cicero, as his slaves, the torchlight gleaming on their fine livery, of which he was somewhat proud, jogged him back

to Rome. "Did he imagine I wished to go to Sardinia? Curious!"

As soon as Cicero had left him Pompey returned to the smaller room where he had been sitting with his wife before the orator's arrival. Julia was lying on a couch, supported by cushions; she wore a thin pleated robe of a curious shade of blue, against which her bright hair glowed strangely; her lovely face was a little pale, and soft shadows lay beneath her eyes, but her beauty was not diminished but rather enhanced by these traces of her frustrated adventure into motherhood. Her eyes were closed now as if in sleep; tears hung on her golden lashes. Pompey came up to the couch very quietly, and stood looking down at her, his mind suspended for a moment in contemplation of her ethereal beauty. As he watched, the tears rolled softly down her delicate cheek.

"My darling," exclaimed Pompey with infinite tenderness, bending to kiss the tears away. "Don't cry, don't cry. You *shall* come with me to Sardinia."

Julia opened her blue eyes and gazed up at him, smiling deliciously. Pompey clapped his hands and ordered the slave to fetch Demetrius, who had the arrangements for the journey in hand.

"Yes, you shall go with me," he murmured fondly, his lips in her hair.

"And shall we go to Luca on the way?" begged Julia.

Pompey gave a groan and turned away. On a table near by lay the letter over which he had been sulking, and Julia weeping, when they were interrupted by the arrival of Cicero. It was this letter which had caused his agitation over Cicero's journey. He picked it up again and unrolled it, now. The letter was from Caesar, inviting Pompey to meet him and Crassus, "to confer about what should be done for the good of the Republic and their own safety," at Luca, a little town by an unimportant little river of northern Italy, just within the boundaries of Caesar's

province. Further south than that Caesar could not of course legally come, while invested with proconsular power in Gaul; he regretted the journey which Pompey would be obliged to make, but hoped he might be able to fit it in with his journey to Sardinia.

"How does he know I'm going to Sardinia?" grumbled Pompey, reading, and remembering that in his interview with Cicero, he had imagined for a moment that the orator might be invited to Luca too.

Julia was silent. Everyone knew that her father had come to Nearer Gaul a little while ago to hold the proconsular assizes, and if Pompey imagined that nobody wrote letters to Caesar except himself and Crassus, he was very much mistaken. She knew that her father had heard of Pompey's wavering loyalty to him, as well as she knew every time it wavered; she knew that this invitation was to regain it, make it firm again. Julia felt suddenly sorry for her husband, who was so much less astute than her father, and threw her arms round his neck protectively. Demetrius chose this moment to enter, and Pompey, embarrassed, put her gently aside.

"I am going to Sardinia, Demetrius!" cried Julia joyously.

Demetrius lowered his eyes and stood in a mulish silence till he received the order to prepare for her departure from his patron's lips.

"And do we go to Luca?" he enquired, not without insolence. "Or no?"

"That is not decided yet," replied Pompey in a haughty tone.

"If madam comes with us, we shall go to Luca," muttered Demetrius.

"The extra miles will do you good, Demetrius—you are growing shockingly fat," said Julia teasingly.

"It is not because I spare myself in the service of Cnaeus Pompeius," flared the freedman.

"I know that," said Julia. As she spoke she gave him

a look of such truth and sweetness that Demetrius was appeased, and went to prepare for the journey to Luca, without further argument.

Julia rushed into Caesar's arms. "Father ! Father !" she cried joyously.

"Well, my child, well !" exclaimed Caesar, no less delighted, stroking with a loving hand her soft cheek and bright curls. "So you are quite grown-up now ! A real Roman matron, eh ? And how do you like it, tell me ?"

"I am very, very, *very* happy," said Julia truthfully, throwing a shy glance over her shoulder towards Pompey, who stood, smiling but embarrassed, in the rear.

"Well, that is good news indeed," said Caesar, with an affectionate look to his son-in-law. He could not help a pang of jealousy as he marked the slight but definite changes in Julia's air which showed that she was now indeed a woman and a wife, but he told himself that this was the course of nature, and he must suffer it. "You certainly look as though marriage agreed with you," he observed cheerfully.

"And you," said Julia, drawing a little back from his arms to survey him appraisingly, "*you* look *tough*."

Caesar laughed in real enjoyment. "Fighting in Gaul makes you tough," he said. "Now go and kiss your grandmother."

"Is Aurelia here ?" said Pompey, surprised.

"A good many illustrious Romans have done me the honour to visit me here," announced Caesar formally. "None more illustrious, or more welcome, than the great Conqueror of the East, my daughter's husband."

Little Luca was indeed crammed with Romans, to whom Caesar was extending a lavish hospitality. Two hundred senators, it was said, were to be seen there in their purple striped tunics and toga of ceremony, and of these so many

actually held state magistracies that more than a hundred lictors could be counted in the town.

All these important personages had come to see Caesar, and desired private interviews with him; merely to keep them all apart from other personages, detested by them but equally important to Caesar's schemes, was a task of infinite difficulty and subtlety, for which one had need be "tough," as Caesar reflected with amusement. The arrival of Pompey still further complicated the problem, for Crassus and Clodius were already in Luca as Caesar's guests, and many of the two hundred Popular senators could not easily forgive the recaller of Cicero and patron of Milo. Indeed Caesar sometimes wondered in amused exasperation to whom, if any, Pompey was *persona grata*, for even Servilia would not receive him. After all, said Servilia, Pompey had murdered her husband while under safe conduct, and even if it were now long ago she had not forgotten it. Caesar thought it a little unreasonable, considering all the killing which had been done during the last twenty-one years, to bear so strong a grudge for one political execution, and hinted as much. Servilia replied quietly: "Doubtless I am unreasonable"—but she would not receive Pompey. She did not choose to tell Caesar that she had had a real pitying tenderness for her melancholy first husband, a man born to fail at all he attempted, who had loved her and clung to her, whom she had betrayed with Caesar. (Sılanus was a different matter; she was Caesar's before she was his.) Nor did she choose to tell her lover that she had a childish resentment against Pompey for having widowed her while Caesar still had a wife—if she had been free when Caesar was free, he might have married her. Servilia, knowing Caesar profoundly, knew that this was very unlikely—still, she kept her resentment against Pompey. She had taught it to her son, feeling it a kind of loyalty to his father. Her thoughts, following this natural path now, arrived at Brutus and so at Cato; she smiled her quiet grave smile, and sent a slave for a recent

letter from Brutus, part of which she wished to read to Caesar. Cato, it appeared, was making a tremendous commotion over the treasury affair in Cyprus; he had invented a new system of accounting, and entered every denarius in two separate lists, while the astounded Greeks, who had never seen anything like such behaviour before, especially from a Roman governor, looked on gaping. Caesar smiled; he was glad Cato had found a toy to keep him busy while more important affairs went on in Rome. Had he been Cato, and Cato Caesar, he would have settled Cyprus in a couple of weeks, out of hand, and hurried home to see what Caesar's friends were doing to the ancient Roman constitution, but to a Stoic, Caesar supposed—and especially to a rigid witless Stoic like Cato—all things were of equal importance, and one must be as anxious over a denarius as over a matter of death and life. Well, Cato's peering blindness was very serviceable to Caesar. Meanwhile, Servilia would not receive Pompey, and Aurelia—who now looked very old and bent and frail, the shock of Julia's miscarriage having greatly shaken her—suddenly turned mulish and declined to receive Clodius; his misdeeds reminded her, she said, of a sewer, and she did not care for such odours in her presence. This awkwardness was turned by Caesar, as his habit was, to his service; very gravely and quietly, with friendly candour, he told his mother's view to Clodius, and gave him a thorough fright by implying as he did so that he and Crassus could no longer support (or pay the debts of) a man association with whom damaged them so much in the eyes of respectable people. The attack on Pompey, added Caesar gravely, had gone far beyond the bounds Crassus had intended for it; it was unfortunate when one's political associates could not take a hint quickly. Having thus chastened Clodius sufficiently, he suddenly gave him a magnificent golden bowl of Gallic workmanship, and urged him to sell it while the market was good. Clodius, thus brought to heel, returned to Rome eager to retrieve his past mistakes.

The critical point of the whole situation, however, lay in the relation of Pompey and Crassus, and one afternoon Caesar invited them both to the house of the chief municipal magistrate of Luca, which he had made his headquarters, to confer with him. He counted on Crassus' noted business punctuality and Pompey's tendency to be a little late for his dignity's sake, and these qualities did not fail him, so that he had several minutes alone with Crassus in the dark, bare little room, as he wished, before Pompey appeared.

"I am glad to see you thus alone," said Caesar at once in a friendly tone, observing as he spoke that Crassus was beginning to show his age. "To some men one cannot reveal the naked truth, because their eyes are not strong enough to bear the sight. But to you I have always spoken the fullest truth. Is it not so, Marcus Licinius?"

"It is so," said Crassus in his usual flat tones. His beady eyes had a friendly glitter, however, for he was pleased by the implied difference between himself and Pompey.

"Very well," said Caesar firmly. "Then listen to the truth now. Of the three of us, Marcus Licinius—you, myself, and Cnaeus Pompeius—I am now the strongest." Crassus raised his head. "Yes," said Caesar, "that is the truth. I have fifty thousand experienced soldiers who will do anything for me—whereas there is a point beyond which men will not go for money."

"They will go for more money," said Crassus coldly.

Caesar shook his head. Crassus poked out his under-lip and looked away into the corner, unconvinced.

"Well, let us lay that aside," said Caesar. "By the way, you have heard that I intend to build a new Forum for Rome? The present one is sadly overcrowded."

Crassus stared. "A whole *forum*?" he said.

"I can well afford it," threw out Caesar negligently. "Gaul is surprisingly rich, I find."

There was a pause, then Crassus sniffed. "Well! You

have proved your point, Caius Julius," he observed grimly. "And what now?"

"Pompey is my dear son-in-law," drawled Caesar with slow emphasis, "and I wish him to remain with us. Besides, we need him. Though perhaps not very potent while with us, against us he would be highly dangerous."

"He is dangerous now," contended Crassus crossly, "because he never knows his own mind. You should come to Rome yourself, Caius Julius, and look after our affairs."

"I can't leave Gaul," said Caesar with decision. "Why will no one understand the importance of what I am doing there? If I leave it before it is fully pacified, one day the Gauls will learn their strength and descend on Rome, and then there will be no more Rome. No Rome, no law, no order, no towns, no trade, no money," he explained impatiently. For a moment he thought he had been too crude even for Crassus, but the plutocrat showed no resentment, and Caesar went on more smoothly: "Your son Publius is doing very well indeed with me as a cavalry commander. I propose a consulship for you and Pompey, followed by important provinces for you both. With your son's aid, you too should win victories." He added, laughing: "Lucrative victories." At this moment he heard the expected movements without, of Pompey's household officers coming to announce him. "Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus is allied to me by the strongest ties of friendship and marriage," he began in a louder tone—and was interrupted, as he hoped, by the announcement of Pompey's arrival.

The look on Pompey's face, as he entered, showed that he had heard his father-in-law's expression of goodwill; and the three men's greetings were fairly friendly. Pompey was wearing a highly ornamental gown embroidered in various colours, which he had brought from the East and worn at his triumph and the Senate had by special decree authorised him to wear on other ceremonial occasions. He looked very

much the Conqueror of the East in it, but rather stout and swarthy, while Crassus in his scanty toga, obese, wrinkled, and bald-headed save for a straggling fringe of greying hair, appeared even less comely. "I am certainly the best-looking of the three," thought Caesar, amused and pleased—he was leaner and stronger and of a better colour since his outdoor life in Gaul, *tough* as Julia said, and he was dressed with his usual scrupulous care and good taste. He broached the subject of a consulship for Pompey and Crassus with his accustomed skill.

"I should like a special command in Egypt as my pro-consular province," said Pompey eagerly, "or failing that, Spain." (To himself he thought: Egypt would be worth any sacrifice, for it confers so much power, but Spain is at peace, I could rule it from Rome and stay with Julia.)

Caesar gave him an odd look, divining, but scarcely crediting, his thought. "Spain has always been obedient to the might of your arms," he agreed smoothly, thinking: The Senate will never consent to give either of them Egypt, and the gods be praised for it! "The opulent Syria perhaps would please Marcus Crassus better. For my part, I should wish to have Gaul confirmed to me for another five years."

"Five years!" exclaimed his hearers.

"It will take quite that time to subdue it properly," said Caesar. For a moment his brow furrowed and he seemed preoccupied, but he rallied himself and added: "And I must be allowed to sue for the consulship in my absence, during my last year in Gaul. I must be consul before I leave my army."

"So as not to be liable to impeachment," murmured Crassus.

Caesar declined to hear this ugly word, though his motive was exactly as Crassus stated.

"What do you say, then? Is it agreed?" he said, looking from one to the other cheerfully.

"But, Caius Julius," said Pompey with diffidence, thinking

all the same how agreeable it would be to have Crassus away in Syria: "Do you think they will elect us? Neither of us"—it was a great effort thus to couple Crassus' name with his own, but simple honesty required the statement—"neither of us is now very popular."

Caesar smiled. "I shall send a couple of legions home on furlough in time to vote at the elections," he said significantly.

The conference was over; Caesar returned to Further Gaul, Crassus to Rome; Pompey departed to superintend the corn supply in Sardinia. Before he sailed, however, he sent a friendly note to Cicero, begging him to postpone the discussion of Caesar's land law in the Senate. By this time the results of the Luca conference were known in Rome, Caesar's gold had spread into every section of Roman society, and the cowed Senate agreed to everything demanded. Cicero, in disgust at being thus for a second time deserted by the patrician Optimates, and not unmindful of his own safety, suddenly discovered that he was sick of their jealousy and haughty selfishness, and wrote to Pompey putting himself entirely at the triumvirate's disposal.

"Since those who have no power refuse me their affection," he said angrily, "I will secure the affection of those who have power."

"A very characteristic sentiment, my good Cicero," sneered Terentia in a fury.

Cicero was the better able to endure her scorn, however, because a timely loan from Caesar now supplemented the inadequate sum the Senate had voted towards the repair of his house.

At the end of the year Cato returned from Cyprus, bringing two ships laden with treasure, every denarius of which

was scrupulously accounted for, and ready to be delivered to the Senate and people of Rome. In real admiration the whole Senate, irrespective of party divisions, went down the Tiber to meet him, accompanied by a great throng of citizens; but Cato, furious at this ceremonial reception so at variance with his principles, gave orders to sail past the waiting crowd, and land at the ordinary dock in Rome.

"It is somewhat rude—they have been waiting a long time—they will be angry," suggested Brutus to his uncle.

Cato snorted, and repeated his orders emphatically.

The elections, several times postponed, as usual nowadays, on account of riots in the City, were at length conducted at the beginning of the following year. By their votes, their armed presence and their tales of their general, Caesar's soldiers contributed very materially to the election of Caesar's two allies. Cato on the other hand was rejected in his candidature for a lesser magistracy; he did his best to stiffen the resentment felt in some quarters against the "three-headed monster" into a solid resistance, but men doubted the common sense of a man so awkward and so pedantic, and he failed.


The provinces of Spain and Syria were allotted to Pompey and Crassus as they desired.

His appointment had an odd, but perhaps not altogether surprising, effect upon Crassus. It seemed as though his life-time's longings burst their bounds at sight of the unique and tremendous opportunity for plunder now conferred upon him, for his inscrutable reserve suddenly melted into an open greed, and he chattered to all and sundry about the riches of his proconsular province, and the conquests he should win there. He meant to invade Parthia, Bactria, even India, he babbled; India was very rich, very rich indeed. . . .

Meanwhile Pompey governed Spain from Italy, as he had planned, and was happy there with Julia. His stone theatre was finished, and he dedicated it with some magnificent games, including a display of elephants.

Caesar fought continuously in Gaul, and presently with a light heart invaded Britain.

When it was learned in Rome that pearls were to be found on this island's coasts, Crassus could hardly contain himself. Pearls ! But there were pearls enough in Parthia, doubtless ; were there not pearls enough in Parthia ? So he babbled to everyone he met, until the general conscience of Rome, though not usually very sensitive about other nations' rights, was revolted by these shameless projects of invasion against a country which had never done Rome any harm, solely for the sake of wealth. When Crassus left Rome ceremonially in his general's cloak, a tribune actually awaited him at the gate to invoke a curse upon him, burning incense and pouring wine to the gods, to add solemnity to his denunciations of the miser.



THE ALLIANCE IS BROKEN

DEMETRIUS, returning from a business journey concerning Pompey's Picenum estates, found the house very quiet. The usual janitor was not on duty, and the freedman was admitted by a new young slave who did not know him. Demetrius brushed past the scared lad impatiently, but then, seeing no one about to announce him to his patron, hesitated; it was possible that Pompey was at the bedside of Julia, whose second pregnancy was proving, Demetrius understood, somewhat difficult. Just then his own wife came down the stairs; her eyes were red and her face swollen with weeping. Demetrius slightly shrugged his shoulders; he was used to these storms from her, but nowadays thought them lacking in the decorum due to her age and his position. There was a very good understanding between them, however; Demetrius just framed the words: "Where is he?" with his lips, without uttering them, and his wife silently jerked her head in the direction of Pompey's study. Demetrius approached and, finding the doors closed, knocked respectfully. There was no reply. Demetrius suddenly felt uneasy. This silence, his wife's look—everything seemed very strange. He knocked again urgently, and after waiting a moment vainly for an answer, pushed open the doors and went in.

In the dim light of a small lamp he perceived his patron lying face downwards on the couch, his gown drawn about his head.

"You are ill, Cnaeus Pompey!" cried Demetrius, rushing to his side.

Pompey raised a face so drawn, so haggard, so blotched

and stricken that Demetrius' heart seemed to turn over in his breast. "Where is the physician?" he cried wildly. "Why are you not in bed?"

"O—is it you, Demetrius?" said Pompey in a leaden tone.

"Yes, yes, it is your Demetrius," cried the freedman anxiously, seizing one of Pompey's cold hands and clasping it between his own. "Are you in pain?"

Pompey's hand lay in his, numb and inert; he neither moved nor spoke. Demetrius watched him in increasing anxiety.

At length he put his lips to his patron's fingers.

"Master!" he said imploringly. "Speak to me!"

"She is dead, Demetrius," whispered Pompey.

"What?" cried the freedman, starting back.

"Yes—dead in childbirth. She fell into labour yesterday, and died this morning. You see," explained Pompey in slow heavy tones, "she has never been strong since that other time, you know, when she miscarried."

Demetrius' face changed; his flaccid jaw dropped, his long almond eyes filled unexpectedly with tears.

"Why, that's a pity!" he exclaimed. His voice had a note of surprise, and indeed he was surprised by his own grief. Julia! Forgetting all ceremony Demetrius sank down on a nearby stool, spread his hands on his knees and gazed in front of him, seeing her clear blue eyes, the sun in her bright hair. He heard her sweet childish voice teasing him about his fatness. "Why, that's a pity," repeated Demetrius in a grieving tone.

He sat on in silence for a few moments. The lamp flickered; Demetrius without thinking put out his finger and thumb and trimmed the wick. And suddenly it struck him that he would probably have to compose the letter announcing the news to Caesar. "The gods defend us!" thought Demetrius, blenching. "What will Caesar say? The gods defend us!" He asked in a voice that trembled:

“ And the child ? ”

“ Dying ! ” cried Pompey, anguished.

Demetrius leant forward and laid his hand on his patron's shoulder soothingly. They stayed thus for a long time.

At length Demetrius murmured timidly :

“ I suppose the sad news has been sent to Caius Caesar ? ”

“ Caesar ! ” cried Pompey in an angry tone, raising his head. “ What has he to do with it ? ” Isn't she to be mine even in death, he thought ; it would have been my child, but even that is denied me. Clodius, it is all the fault of Clodius, who made that riot, and Clodius is the tool of Caesar. Now I shall never know whose she was most, mine or Caesar's. In a tone of angry jealousy, he repeated contemptuously : “ Caesar ! ”

This Britain is an accursed place, thought Caesar, turning impatiently from the tent flap ; the air is full of mist, the distant hills and the trees are always veiled in it, so that everything is less or more than it looks ; the winds are cold, the colours are dim, even the waves of the sea have a different roll, and the tides are really extraordinary. If I were one of these superstitious fools, I should think I had broken my luck by coming to it. Ever since my first expedition here, things have gone wrong. I've lost ships, I've lost men, I've left Labienus in charge in Gaul and the silly fellow has begun to think he leads the rope instead of following it, and will have to be taught his place ; my poor mother has gone, and now—he broke off, and tried not to think of Julia. What was that fool her husband doing to let her die, he went on thinking at once ; fool, fool that you are, Cnaeus Pompey. He can't have had her properly attended ; his physician is sure to be a fool—trust him to choose his slaves badly ! O my lovely little girl, my sweet little daughter, my only child ; that great clumsy idiot has let you die. Your bright spirit

was wasted on that stupid well-meaning oaf, so inferior to you, and now you are gone, and nothing can be done make your life the path of sun and sweet it should have been.

Well, come, let us be just, reflected Caesar; it was my own fault, I married them. They loved each other, and she was very happy with him. I suppose she was delicate after her early miscarriage, and that was partly my fault too, because of Clodius. I must not bear a grudge against him. But I do, I do, by Venus! No, no, that would be simply stupid. Poor Magnus, he will be very miserable—till he marries again. Will he quarrel with me now, I wonder? I ought to be in Nearer Gaul now, keeping an eye on affairs in Rome; the merest hint of a defeat and they will all be on me like dogs on a wounded boar.

He went to the inner opening and called the staff officer on duty.

"Have you sent to the coast to urge speed in the repairs to the ships?" he said impatiently.

"Not this evening, sir," replied the officer.

"I ordered it," said Caesar with a frown.

"Was that not yesterday, sir?" suggested the officer with respect.

"It is to be done every day," said Caesar sharply.

The officer saluted and withdrew to write the letter.

"Not quite so bland as he used to be, our Caius?" murmured his assistant.

"Shut up, you fool; remember his daughter's dead," said the senior officer.

"Yes, it's a shame! I should like to have known *his* daughter," said the younger man consideringly. "I should think a daughter of his would be rather wonderful."

"Well, you'll never have the chance now," snapped his superior. "She's ashes."

At this point Caesar, who overheard the dialogue, exclaimed angrily and called in a shrill tone for silence.

The two men, ashamed and vexed, applied themselves to their work without making any reply.

After a moment Caesar sighed, and passing his hands over his face, said to himself grimly: "No, *not* as bland as he used to be, our Caius."

The landscape was highly disagreeable to Roman eyes, accustomed to the varied contours, hues and surfaces of Italy, for it consisted of but two elements, sky and sand. The sky, white with the heat diffused by the fierce Syrian sun, arched over the legion in a relentless monotony; the pale sand stretched away on all sides as far as the eye could reach in a terrific plain, broken only by a few bare sandy hillocks. There was no stream, no tree, no grass, no bird or beast; nothing but sand, sky and silence. The sand was very dry and soft, and slipped beneath the soldiers' feet as they marched; the muscles of every leg in Crassus' army ached with the unaccustomed tread. The men had shed as much of their marching wear as their officers would let them, but the sweat still streamed down their blistered necks and arms; the sand got between their toes, down their throats, and in their nostrils; altogether they were very uncomfortable. It did not cheer, but rather the more annoyed them when that confounded Arab in his flowing white robe came galloping back along the column and exhorted them to courage in his lisping Latin.

"You are not now in Italy," he cried, "but on the confines of Syria and Parthia."

"Hercules! Don't we know it?" growled the soldiers.

If these Parthians all ride like him, we shall have a bit of a job, said some, watching the Arab wheel so delicately and swiftly; he nips about like a blooming goat. Young Crassus will attend to that, was the reply, with the thousand horse he's brought from Gaul, from Caesar. They all brightened a little at this famous name, but one said gloomily: I hear them

Gauls is half dead with heat and thirst. Not used to it, you know. Gaul's a lot colder even than Italy. At this their faces, already a little strained with the heat, lengthened further. The Arab Ariamnes galloped past them again, going forward, waving his hand, his white teeth a-gleam in a wide smile. O, to the cross with him ! Curse the grinning barbarian ! said the men. It's his fault we're here—we were going on nicely through the mountains before he came and persuaded Crassus to take this road. At Crassus' name they all fell silent and looked about uneasily ; it was mutiny to say anything against the general, and the centurion was just a rank or two behind, with his ears wide open. But they really felt very uncomfortable about Crassus. Not that he was a bad sort of chap in himself—nothing vicious about him ; looked rather venerable with his grey hair, as a matter of fact, and it was nice to see him so proud of his son—now there was a good young fellow for you ! Smart and eager, a great one for discipline, but reasonable all the same. But old baldhead now—it wasn't decent the way he stayed days in cities, calculating their revenue and weighing up their treasure—yes, weighing it with a pair of scales ! You'd have thought a Roman general engaged on a big campaign could have found something better to do. Besides, he ordered subject kings to send him soldiers, and then let them off for a sum down—pretty near bribery and corruption, that, when you came to think. A general so fond of gold wasn't likely to be liberal with his donatives ; but there you were, you had to stick to your general till the end of his campaign, you'd only him to look to for a bit of land to live on when you got home ; if he didn't get it for you, nobody else gave you anything. Getting land for soldiers from the Senate was like milking he-goats, anyway. But old Crassus now—he hadn't been in the field for sixteen years ; and somehow bad omens seemed to dog him all the way. Not that one cared much about that sort of nonsense, of course ; still, it's a fact he fell down the temple steps before starting this campaign, and the sacrifice slipped

from his hand only the other day. He's old, of course. Well, and why in the name of Romulus send an old general out here ?

"Keep your helmets on there !" rang out the voice of the centurion.

They looked round ; three ranks back someone had slung his helmet on his shoulder. Whew ! That looked good. He didn't put it on again, either. After a while a few more began very quietly to slip theirs off too, and soon the whole manipule was bareheaded. The relief was immense. The centurion ran up and down, shouting and threatening to report them ; they didn't answer back, but somehow forgot to replace their helmets. Then all of a sudden Cassius the quaestor came rushing at them ; a dangerous fellow to cross, Cassius, tall and lean and swarthy, almost bilious, you might say, in complexion, sharp with his words and always in a bit of a temper, a good soldier but a terror for discipline. He swore at them now with his usual angry energy, calling them every name they'd ever heard and a few they hadn't—in a way it quite heartened them to hear him—and threatened to crucify the lot if every helmet wasn't on every head before he counted three. Well, the helmets went on, of course ; Cassius looked up and down the ranks with that sharp angry look of his, and then went off again forward. He was hardly out of sight before the man three ranks back, the first to shed his helmet, fell down in the sand, all his equipment jingling. He was quite dead. Sunstroke.

"You aren't in Italy, fellow-soldiers, you're on the confines of Syria and Parthia," sang out someone in a high voice, imitating the Arab Ariamnes.

"Tell us Romulus founded Rome," muttered the soldiers, thoroughly dispirited.

At the head of the column a few of the chief officers had come to hold their midday conference with Crassus ; he had kept them waiting some time, and their temper—especially the temper of Cassius—had not improved with keeping.

Cassius sat in the stifling tent with his arms crossed, digging up the sand irritably with his toe, and snapping at Publius Crassus, the general's son, whenever opportunity offered. He liked Publius well enough really; his very fresh clear skin, bright black eyes like his father's, and dark crisp chestnut hair receding a little above his forehead gave him a thoroughly cultured, man-of-the-world air, which his personality did not belie, for he was a dashing sort of fellow but not at all dissipated, and though he liked poetry and that sort of thing, he undoubtedly did know how to keep a squadron of cavalry in condition. But Publius held his high position solely because he was Crassus' son, which angered Cassius, and also he talked too much about Gaul and Caesar.

"In Gaul," he was beginning now in his deep pleasant tones.

"Did the general keep you waiting an hour every day in Gaul?" interrupted Cassius, sneering.

Publius' pleasant face grew angry; but he was no fool, easily drawn into a brawl; he simply tightened his lips and said nothing. Cassius was rather sorry for what he'd said, but the whole situation, this absurd forced march through the open desert, on the recommendation of a lying Arab whom old baldhead was fool enough to think he'd bought, and in spite of the many warnings Crassus had received from the natives about the Parthian cavalry—it maddened Cassius beyond control. Old baldhead was so infatuated by the thought of booty, thought the quaestor savagely, that no other consideration weighed with him at all; he seemed really mad for plunder. The appearance of Crassus now, as he came into the conference tent, by no means reassured him; for the old man smiled and nodded with a fatuous complacency.

"We're not to have the Arab to confer with us to-day? That's a gain, at any rate," said Cassius disagreeably.

"Ariamnes has left us," said Crassus, smiling.

"Left?" exclaimed Cassius and Publius together, startled.

"He has gone to disorder the enemy's affairs on our behalf," explained Crassus complacently.

"Gone to betray our affairs to the enemy, you mean," said Cassius. He felt such serious alarm that he actually sought support from Publius, glancing at him appealingly, and met the eyes of Publius seeking his, equally disturbed.

"Was it wise to let him go, sir?" suggested Publius.

"He will not betray us; it would not be to his advantage—I oiled his palm too well," replied Crassus impatiently.

Publius, who was profoundly ashamed of his father's attitude towards money, lowered his eyes, and the other officers were silent out of respect for him.

"For my part, sir," said Cassius at length, striving to speak agreeably: "I think it would be well for your son to take a couple of hundred of his Gaulish cavalry, and catch Ariamnes promptly."

For the life of him he could not prevent a slight sneer entering his tone at "Gaulish," and Publius' bright eyes were raised in an angry look. Before they could break into open dispute, however, there came an interruption; shouts and a disorderly noise of hoofs, outside. Cassius sprang up and pushed out of the tent, and found some of the army's scouts galloping frantically past him towards the column; he pulled them up with a sharp word of command, and one wheeled his foaming horse towards him and cried his news. It was sufficiently startling; they had encountered the main body of the enemy advancing in full battle array, and only the few men Cassius now saw had escaped to bring the warning. Cassius turned to give the news to his general, but found that all within the tent had crowded to the opening and overheard it. The faces of all but young Crassus wore an expression of amazement and consternation, while Publius had a look of excited happiness which seemed to Cassius even less suitable to the occasion. They all shouted at once, and Crassus cried out importantly:

"My general's cloak! Where is my general's cloak? I must wear that on a day of battle."

"Perhaps you'll give orders for the disposition of the army first, sir?" said Cassius roughly. "My suggestion is," he went on quickly, to prevent any other idea being put into Crassus' head, "that we should open out the ranks as much as possible, to give less target to these Parthian arrows we hear so much about, and less chance of being surrounded." There was a murmur of approval; unfortunately Cassius could not resist continuing with a sneer: "I don't know whether Caesar would fight that way, of course."

Publius folded his arms and gave him another angry look, but the disposition of the infantry legions was not his affair, and he merely said: "I await your instructions for the cavalry, sir."

"I'll give out your orders, Marcus Crassus!" cried Cassius, dashing away with a great show of enthusiasm in the pretence that the old man had agreed.

The legions hurriedly put themselves into battle gear and spread out as directed. It was not the way they were used to fight, but they supposed their officers knew best. Hardly had they got into line, however, than another order came down, that they were to form into their usual huge square; obediently they began to do this, shuffling about, tired but dutiful, in the hot sand. Cassius' wing on the left seemed not to be doing it, and there was a good deal of confusion. Crassus had in fact changed his mind, for Cassius' unlucky sentence, only partly understood in the excitement of the moment, had made him believe that the open formation was quite contrary to Caesar's practice, and he had great faith in Caesar. He was a little out of practice in military tactics himself, he knew, and in such cases it was safest to follow the best models. Cassius sent messengers flying to enquire angrily what the centre thought it was doing; when they returned with the news of the general's fresh orders, Cassius sent to confirm them, cursed bitterly and began to feel very anxious indeed.

Luckily in a mile or two his wing suddenly came upon a small stream—a wretched thing in size and flow, but drinkable and some sort of protection against being surrounded. Greatly relieved, Cassius halted his men, then hurried to the general to advise remaining there till the following morning; the men needed food and rest, he said, and meanwhile scouts could ascertain more accurately the position of the enemy.

“But the whole element of surprise would be thrown away!” urged Publius in a surprised contemptuous tone. “To halt in an open plain in front of an advancing enemy is surely the worst possible strategy.”

“So *you* say,” said Cassius bitterly. “You are younger than I, so of course you know better. I say it depends on the condition of the men.”

“Under Caesar we are accustomed to disregard fatigue and rely on courage,” said Publius, provoked out of his usual good nature into insult.

“Caesar! Caesar is in Gaul, not Syria!” shouted Cassius. “I tell you, the men need food.”

“Let them take it in the ranks, then,” intervened Crassus soothingly. “We will allow a short interval, and then proceed.”

Cassius flung away in a rage, but after a few steps returned to his general. “May I suggest with all respect, sir,” he said in a tone thick with bitterness, “that you change your black robe? The men may think its colour a bad omen.”

“I am not wearing a black robe,” said Crassus testily. “This is my general’s purple cloak, Caius Cassius.”

“It is black, father,” said Publius, choking with mortification.

Crassus, unconvinced, held up a corner of the cloak and peered at it. The two younger men, unable for different reasons to bear the spectacle, flung away to their respective commands.

The Roman legionaries hastily unbuckled their provisions and began to eat and drink, but had hardly tasted before the trumpets called them to move on again. They obeyed, and

were led forward at a smart pace, and forced to keep up with the cavalry, which rode between the divisions. What with the pace, the dust, the heat, and their half-digested meal, they were pretty well out of breath when at length they caught sight of the enemy. The front ranks of the Parthians looked few and shabby, but suddenly hordes of them poured out from behind the sandhills, glittering with bronze and gold, tossing the hair tied in great shaggy knots above their eyes, screaming in ecstasy, and galloping wildly across the plain. Their general looked a handsome chap, young, and a good horseman, though his face was painted—and beside him rode that Arab fellow, Ariamnes. Just what I thought, growled the Romans to each other; let me get at the traitor! But they felt rather downhearted all the same. Now the Roman trumpets rang out, and now in reply a fearful hollow sound, like thunder, seemed to boom out all round the horizon in a terrific maddening roll; it came from the Parthian drums. They were the signal for the battle to commence, evidently, for as they began to boom the arrows flew. And what arrows! So thick and strong they pierced men's shields and pinned their arms to them, struck through a man's foot and held it to the ground. So hooked, that when men tried to pull them out and free themselves, the arrows caught and tore. Against an enemy in such close formation as the Romans then, not an arrow could miss its mark; the Parthians galloped round and about, using their bows as they flew, and as fast as one line retired another came to take their place; there seemed no end to them. They'll finish soon, and we shall come to the sword, hand to hand, said the Roman veterans to the recruits cheerfully; but meanwhile they could not come within a hundred paces of any Parthian, and the arrows spread further and further round the army's flank. Suddenly through the flying sand they caught a glimpse of a corps of camels, laden with bundles of arrows, from which the horsemen were replenishing their quivers; then the Romans fell silent and did not

look in each other's eyes. If only they'd come *near* us, they thought; why don't they fight with the proper weapons? Fighting with arrows at a distance is a coward's job, not worth doing. Crassus, who had changed his cloak, stood looking quickly from side to side, quivering with anxiety, waiting to give the signal to advance; but still the drums rolled, the sand rose from the Parthian hoofs, the arrows flew. We must stop this, decided Crassus, plunging wildly among his dimming memories of war, and he sent a message to his son, ordering him to take his men out and try to turn the enemy's flank by a charge.

The delighted Publius gave the order, and led out eight cohorts of fully armed legionaries, and five hundred of his Gauls. These made a glorious sight, all picked men, very big and fine, with hair on their upper lip, their magnificent native valour stiffened, not subdued, by Roman discipline, riding picked horses, with glossy sides and gleaming silver-studded bridles. The Romans, admiring, gave the squadron an encouraging shout as it flew by; that'll stop these arrows, they said cheerfully—and sure enough it did; masses of Parthians turned and fled at the first onslaught. Publius was intensely happy; he charged and wheeled and charged again; the Parthians yielded, the Gauls flew after them, the legionaries, shouting, marched swiftly up behind; the battle was won and he had won it; he was a great general, almost as great a general as Caesar—he wouldn't remain a mere cavalry commander, no, not he, he was a general; what was that difference between them, now, which Caesar was always joking about? Cavalry commanders never knew when to stop——

“Jupiter!” exclaimed young Crassus, pulling on his rein.

He looked round him in sudden terrible anxiety. They were miles from the main army; nothing in sight but sand and sky and flying Parthians. Was it a trick to decoy them away? Was that dust there an enemy squadron in his rear?

"Sound the signal to retire!" shouted Publius promptly.

The trumpet blared, the Gauls, panting, wheeled their sweat-streaked horses; but it was already much too late. The flying Parthians were already sweeping round, from the distance others rushed to the attack in overwhelming numbers; the Gauls turned and charged, but the Parthian spears were too strong for them, and they had to fall back, wounded and unhorsed, upon the infantry. Publius was badly hurt in the arm, but did not forget his duties; he sent messages instantly to his father demanding support, and looked round swiftly for a hill—in Gaul one always looked for a hill when one was in difficulties. Seeing a solid sandy eminence at a little distance, he urged his men thither and got them drawn up all round on the slopes, with such horses as remained tied together in the centre, rather neatly.

"You have only to stand firm now and wait for the other legions!" shouted Publius. His voice was hoarse and cracked with thirst and sand, but still it was the voice of a leader; his men, Romans and Gauls, looked at him gratefully, stood firm and waited for the other legions. But unfortunately in this new kind of warfare a hill was a disadvantage; on the plain the shields of the front rank protected the men behind to some extent, but on a hill they were all equally exposed to those abominable arrows. And where *were* the other legions? Caesar's sure to have sent them off long ago, young Crassus told himself consolingly—and then remembered that his general this time wasn't Caesar. He blenched, and for the first time saw the possibility of a terrible disaster. Surely, surely, he couldn't be going to lose all these men? Nearly a whole legion, and the flower of the horse! A defeat! And of such magnitude! Publius rushed up and down the hill in an agony, exhorting his men. They turned frightened but trustful eyes on his panting bleeding figure; he was the general's son, so it must be all right really, they thought; generals' sons never got cut off like this; they were getting knocked about a bit, but the other legions would come up

presently, and it would soon be evening and they safe in camp, and they could talk it all over with the other men and tell a tale or two. There was a dust-cloud on the horizon; it might be Caesar—I mean, my father, Publius corrected himself impatiently. The dust-cloud grew and grew; on Publius' hot contorted face a smile quivered—if only it was the army, all would yet be well!

“Can you see the eagles?” he panted, shading his eyes from the heat of glaring sky and glaring sand, straining to catch a glimpse of Roman standards.

The dust sank for a moment, and the oncoming host showed Parthian.

Then all the men on the hill knew they were as good as dead, and the friends of Publius urged him to take the best horse left and try to escape just with two or three of the Gaulish officers—in the dust and the shouting a small group might get away unseen.

“No!” panted Publius. “Never!” It was bad enough for the honour of the Crassi that the father should be a miser, but none should be able to say the son deserted his men in the hour of defeat. “Never!” said Publius again hoarsely.

The Parthians scoured madly round and round, taunting and yelling and pouring arrows from their twanging bows on the dying Romans; the circle they made grew smaller and smaller each time they flew round; Publius thought of his wife and child.

Meanwhile Crassus, thrown by his son's messengers into an anguish between fear for the whole army if he tried to move it and fear for Publius if he did not, hesitated and dallied, sent messages to Cassius but received no coherent reply—for the Parthians, taught by Ariamnes the relative worth of the various Roman commanders, had left troops enough on Cassius' wing to keep him fully occupied during their strategic retreat—and finally decided to march in the direction taken by his son. At this moment the dust-clouds

on the horizon resolved themselves into returning Parthians, the drums sounded again with maddening insistence, the heavy arrows flew—and Ariamnes the Arab rode up and down before the Roman ranks, holding aloft the head of Publius, squinting and distorted in violent death, impaled on a spear. A gasp of horror arose from the Roman ranks. One or two threw spears at the treacherous Arab, but their hands seemed to shake with superstitious fear, and the spears fell short.

“Who is the father of this brave man?” sang Ariamnes in his lisping Latin, waving the head horribly in the air. “It cannot be that cowardly miser Crassus!”

“Pay no heed to him, Romans,” cried the wretched father, white and trembling, the tears pouring down his wrinkled cheeks. “My son is dead, but we still have Rome to live for. Shout now, and charge the barbarians home!”

The Romans gave a faint unsteady cry, and moved forward uncertainly. The Parthians laughed, and kept up a long exultant shout as they galloped round and round the hopeless and terrified legions; the drums sounded, the arrows flew.

Night at length put an end to the slaughter. The Parthians never fought in darkness, and now withdrew a little way. The exhausted Romans flung themselves down where they stood, and ate what little provision they had with them; the wounded, shivering in the desert cold, implored their friends not to march and leave them behind to the mercy of barbarians, but the legionaries made no answer, and when they had eaten made themselves sullenly ready for departure, for they were sure the order would soon come down to go.

Meanwhile Cassius and the other chief officers came to the tent which had been hastily erected to shelter Crassus. They were horribly aware that the whole army was in the most frightful danger. It was necessary to get the dispirited soldiers into order, to try to put some heart into them, and to march

towards the nearest town, at once, if an appalling military disaster, perhaps the worst in Roman history, were to be averted. The officers found Crassus lying on a couch, wrapped in the black cloak which had proved so true an omen, his face covered, in an attitude of despair. The rest could scarcely bring themselves to speak to the unhappy father, for sheer pity, but Cassius said strongly :

“ Marcus Crassus, we must march at once. It is necessary for the good of the Republic that you rouse yourself and give the orders.”

The huddled figure stirred, and the cloak fell back ; it was seen that the general's scanty fringe of hair had turned white with the anguish of the day. The officers exclaimed in compassion, and when the broken old man raised his tear-stained face, peering up at his quaestor with a film of moisture over his beady eyes, several of them turned away, unable to control their own emotion. But Cassius began again impatiently :

“ Marcus Crassus——”

“ Give the orders yourself,” said the old man in a trembling tone. He sank back on his couch, and drew his cloak over his head.

Cassius rushed out at once and began the task of moving a completely demoralised army across an unknown desert at night, with a hostile and victorious army only a few miles away. It was a task beyond the power of man, and in spite of his incessant and terrible exertions only a remnant reached the town of Carrhae with their general before the dawn. The retreat became a flight, the army broke up into small units ; one legion went one way, one another ; as soon as the sun came up the Parthians sprang to horse and pursued ; scattered parties, which broke off and made for the hills, were cut down on the way by the enemy ; the wounded perished to a man, together with a whole legion which had not succeeded in leaving the camp before the coming of daylight. The Parthians approached Carrhae and

it was necessary for Crassus to leave it secretly; to Cassius' fury the old general, who had now recovered a little from his first fearful shock, hired a native guide.

"He'll betray you as Ariamnes betrayed you!" cried the quaestor.

"O no; I've paid him well," murmured Crassus.

The fears of Cassius were justified; the treacherous guide led the Romans backwards and forwards through the night to delay them, until at length Cassius, in a fury at the obstinacy which refused to learn its lesson, left his general, and taking five hundred horse, rode off into the hills. In the morning the Parthians came up with Crassus, and in order to spare themselves the trouble of attacking on ground which was unfamiliar, resorted to strategy, and proposed a meeting to discuss terms of peace. Crassus, his native cunning reasserting itself when negotiations were in question, wished to refuse, for the Romans were not now far from the hills which would be their safety, but his soldiers had lost all confidence in him, and forced him to agree. He went forward on foot, with a few faithful officers, to meet the mounted Parthian general, and stood before him, his finger in the palm of his other hand.

"A Roman commander on foot, and I on horseback!" exclaimed the victorious young Parthian in a sneering tone.

"We each follow the custom of our country," replied Crassus stolidly, looking away.

"If you wish to defeat us, you must learn to ride!" cried the young Parthian, annoyed by his calm inscrutable air, and he commanded a horse to be brought and the Roman general to be mounted.

The weary old man, protesting, was bundled roughly into the fringed saddle, and a Parthian groom began to lead the horse away. The Roman officers cried out at this and seized the bridle; the prearranged skirmish took place; the heavy body of Crassus reeled and tumbled ludicrously to the ground, a Parthian knife through its heart.

The Parthian general thereupon arranged a procession through the land which he called in scorn a Roman triumph. The man who represented Crassus was contemptuously dressed in woman's clothes, and purses instead of laurels were hung on the lictors' rods. The head of Crassus was sent to the court of Parthia and tumbled about the floor at a triumphal banquet, its mouth filled with molten gold.

THE PRICE OF BRIBERY

MILo SANG TO HIMSELF as he changed his clothes—he had been in the Senate all morning, and must attend a religious ceremony in his native Lanuvium on the morrow, so he was dressing now for a night journey. His wife, already wrapped in her travelling cloak, sat on the bed and watched him with an adoring smile; she was delighted to hear him sing, for it meant that his affairs were going well, although the nature and magnitude of these affairs frightened her.

Betrothed to him in the old Lanuvium days, when he was a pushing young fellow with a gift of the gab and very little else—"If words were sesterces, Milo wouldn't need so much of other people's bronze," had grumbled her respectable old country-town merchant father—she had always loved him, and had cried herself to sleep many a night when his ambitions took him away to Rome. She had always believed in Milo, and was not at all surprised by his swift rise to fame; what did surprise her, and excited her adoring gratitude, was his faithfulness, for he had never even suggested breaking their betrothal ties, but had married her last year with every appearance of content. (And Cicero had been present at the wedding! Actually, the great Cicero!) At the time she had thought he couldn't possibly be marrying her merely for the sake of her dowry, for that must seem so small beside the great sums he now earned by his political activities in Rome; and when after a mere month her husband began to press her father for payment of the dowry, and there was trouble between the two men, and it came out that Milo was up to his neck in debt, she had

been very unhappy, and wept bitterly. But Milo with rough kindness had reassured her; everyone was in debt in Rome nowadays, he said, and she must forget her old-fashioned country notions—they weren't living in the days of Cato the Censor now, after all—and look forward to being the wife of one of Rome's consuls next year, instead. He had good hopes of being elected, if only he could manage to get the elections held in reasonable time. His wife, who had thought that the days for elections in Rome were settled by consulting the gods, opened her eyes wide at this, and Milo had to explain that elections were always postponed three or four times nowadays before they could be brought to a conclusion, on account of riots started, he said, by Clodius; may the gods destroy him! This, it seemed, was another of those matters which were different now from what they had been in the old days. Milo's wife tried hard to accustom herself to them and behave as though she had always been familiar with these new City ways, and gradually she succeeded well enough, even about the gladiators. At first she had very much disliked riding about surrounded by a mob of gladiators; in Lanuvium such an escort would be regarded as exaggerated, silly, almost indecent, and at first she had felt the same; but now she had grown quite used to their presence. To-night, for instance, there were quite fifty men of one kind and another waiting about the house to escort them to Lanuvium, but she did not so much as mention them to her husband, for she knew that he would merely reply as he had replied so many times before, that a guard was necessary to protect him against Clodius, and the mere name of that monster Clodius was enough to throw him into a rage. She judged indeed from her husband's cheerful humming now that Clodius had not been in the Senate to-day, and presently learned that she was right; the abominable Clodius was out of Rome. Emboldened by the good temper this had induced in Milo, she ventured to ask:

“Is there any more news from Syria to-day?”

For she had a brother in Crassus' army, and was suffering great anxiety about him. The news from Syria was so bad ! It would kill her mother if he had come to harm !

" Syria, Syria ! " shouted Milo cheerfully, slapping her shoulder in affection as he urged her from the room : " Always thinking about Syria ! Why don't you give a little attention to what your husband's doing in Rome ? "

He laughed as he spoke, however, for he knew her passionate interest in every detail of his career.

As soon as they had left Rome behind, and were rolling rather heavily along the Appian Way in their travelling carriage, laden with presents for their respective parents, Milo began to tell her everything that had happened that day, including especially an invitation to dine a few days hence which he had received from Cicero. Milo was very proud of these signs of his social progress, and now discussed at some length his probable fellow-guests. Would Pompey be there or no ? Such a queer fellow, Pompey ; sometimes so arrogant, sometimes so friendly ; sometimes so homely, sometimes so stiff. He might be there ; but since his wife's death he had become so moody, that very likely he would not. Milo's wife shared these speculations eagerly, but in the middle of one of her sentences her husband suddenly fell asleep ; his head lolled on his wife's shoulder, and he snored. " He's tired after all those dreary speeches in the Senate, " thought his wife, putting back his hair from his eyes and drawing her own cloak round him, lovingly. " And no wonder ! "

The carriage rolled on, the wintry twilight deepened into dark and torches were lighted, the gladiators talked amongst themselves in low tones, Milo snored, his wife thought about her mother, Syria, Cicero and Lanuvium, grew a little sleepy too and nodded above her husband. A murmur of voices rose ahead, and the carriage dropped to a walking pace, but the sleeping couple did not stir. The voices swelled, and both became drowsily conscious that something was going on, ahead.

"What's that?" shouted Milo suddenly, starting up. With his hair all tousled, and his face hot, beneath the flickering light of the torches he looked wild and strange, and his wife, startled thus suddenly out of her sleep, felt frightened.

"What is it, Titus?" she asked timidly.

"Clodius!" replied Milo with an oath, flinging back his wrappings. "I heard his laugh."

He climbed swiftly down from the carriage, threw his cloak back over his shoulder, and felt for the dagger he wore at his side. A high arrogant voice could now be distinctly heard in the darkness ahead; with an exclamation of rage Milo strode forward. He was followed at a rush by the whole of his band; the startled horses danced in alarm, and the carriage was dragged several paces before the driver could pull up. The high voice could now be heard drawling:

"Your fellows seem to think they own the road."

Milo's wife stood up and peered forward; she was frightened, but could not restrain her curiosity about the abominable Clodius, stained, as she understood, with every crime, whom she had never seen. She could remember the time when she didn't know what the words describing Clodius' vices meant, and even now in Lanuvium the older members of her family looked surprised and embarrassed when she mentioned them; but that kind of modesty was old-fashioned and silly—as she explained to them, they weren't living now in the days of Cato the Censor—and she really would like to have a sight of the monster. At this moment the slaves fell apart to allow their superiors to confer, and she saw him clearly in the torchlight, sitting his horse; his arrogant patrician features—thin lips, high nose—were flushed and swollen, his eyes bloodshot, his red hair in disorder; his tall thin body swayed a little in the saddle.

"He's drunk," she thought with conviction, and despised him with all her honest Lanuvium heart.

"I suppose you think you own the road because your ancestors made it!" Milo was shouting.

"I didn't say so," replied Clodius in his maddening drawl. "But I believe I have at least as much right to use the Appian Way as you."

"What are you doing here at all? I believe it's an ambush for me," cried Milo.

"My private affairs are not for your ear, my good Milo," returned Clodius haughtily.

"Don't let him be impertinent to you, Titus!" cried his wife shrilly at this.

Clodius insolently shaded his eyes with his hand and gazed at her. She was so exactly the kind of woman he expected of Milo's fancy, with her abundant curled hair, prominent eyes and high full breast, that a sneering smile came over his face, and he raised one hand to her in a salute meant to be insulting. Milo saw the gesture, and it put the final touch to his fury; it reminded him that however successful he was on the Optimates' side, however greatly flattered by his patrician allies, he would never be as patrician as Clodius, never speak with that pure Latinity, wear his clothes with that haughty careless air. The fact that they were on the wrong sides politically, Clodius having usurped the position of leader of the people which was Milo's natural place and thus driven him to the side of the Optimates, made the situation all the more exasperating to a plain man. Usage had taught Milo that the appropriate outlet for political anger was a violent brawl, and he sought that outlet now with even more than his customary energy. He turned to his men.

"Come on, there!" he bawled at them loudly. "Drive that carriage through! If they won't give us the road, we'll take it for ourselves!"

"Take it if you can!" sneered Clodius, perfectly ready to meet blow with blow.

With a hoarse shout the slaves on both sides rushed to the fray. The carriage plunged forward, and Milo's wife fell a-sprawl. She screamed disregarded as she struggled to

disentangle herself from the bundles and wrappings which tumbled about her; the stamping of feet, the clash of iron on iron, dinned in her terrified ears. At length she managed to stagger erect, and caught a glimpse of her husband's flat face—huge, hot, distorted in menace—towering above the aquiline features of Clodius, which seemed to wear a look of faint surprise. The face of Clodius swung slowly downwards through the torchlight and abruptly vanished; at once there came a long high scream which bore a ludicrous and horrible resemblance to Clodius' drawling sneer. The frightened horses plunged again wildly, she cowered, clinging to the seat, and saw no more.

Suddenly everything was quiet again, the road was empty of Clodius' men, the driver was re-lighting a fallen torch, and her husband was standing at her side. Sweat was rolling thickly down his face, his clothes were torn, revealing his hairy chest, and blood oozed from a long cut on his arm.

"O, Titus," sobbed his wife, throwing herself on his neck, "I've been so frightened! Where is—he?"

Milo, shrugging his shoulders and pulling a grimace, without speaking turned down his thumbs in the gesture familiar to all gladiators.

"Dead?" shrieked his wife.

"Quiet! Yes," growled Milo.

"How did it happen?" she whispered, horrified.

"How should I know? One of the men did it in my defence," lied Milo roughly. "I myself was unarmed; see you remember that. I don't want to be brought before the courts for illegally carrying a weapon."

"But you said everyone in Rome carried a weapon nowadays," she whimpered.

"So they do, but there's a law against it all the same," returned her husband, wiping his forehead with the corner of his cloak.

"O, Titus!" she wailed. "Whatever will they say to this in Lanuvium?"

"Well, that doesn't matter at the moment," said Milo with a nervous guffaw, "because we're going back to Rome." To her cry of disappointment he remarked impatiently: "I must get my story told before Clodius' friends tell theirs." He shouted orders to his band to turn at once and make for the City, and wrapping himself in his cloak, climbed into the carriage beside his wife. She continued to sob, quite unnerved by the horrible event of the night. "Stop your crying, now," commanded Milo, not unkindly. "It's all over, and Clodius won't roll his eyes at you any more." He laughed, and repeated: "His eyeballs have done with rolling, now."

"O, Titus," wept his wife wretchedly.

For a moment she was possessed by a wild desire, so strong that it shook her as if with nausea, to run back and be a little girl again in Lanuvium, where the murder of a fellow-Roman in cold blood was regarded as a horrible crime; this new world where murder was a joke was altogether too new for her, she would never be happy and at ease in it, never, never! But after all her husband must be right, she supposed; she wrestled with herself, trying to pull her mind round to his point of view. After a few moments of anguish she succeeded in convincing herself that, the times being what they were, those old Lanuvium notions were foolish, narrow, dull.

"But what will your patrician Optimates friends say, Titus?" she asked, still snivelling and shivering, but ready now to be persuaded that nothing serious had happened, nothing much was wrong.

"They'll be glad enough to be rid of Clodius," replied Milo, unperturbed.

"But what will all Clodius' party say?" persisted his wife, some of her native country shrewdness rising through her distress.

"Can't you give a wounded man a little peace?" growled Milo, beginning to twist a cloth round his bleeding arm. He

spoke crossly, because at the question a slight uneasiness had chilled his heart. What *would* the Popular party say to the murder of its champion and (after Caius Caesar) its prime favourite? (Luckily Caesar himself was a long way off, in Gaul.) He must certainly get back to Rome and put himself under the protection of his Optimates allies immediately, before the news became public property at Rome; decided Milo, sweating a little with anxiety; and he swore at the driver for not going faster, heartily.

The body of Clodius was discovered next morning, lying stiff and cold at the side of the road, by a chance passer-by. Shocked and alarmed, he conveyed it decently to Rome, and handed it over to Clodius' friends, who promptly proceeded to exploit its hacked condition for political purposes. Brutus, who had recently married a niece of Clodius and thus become allied to the family, expostulated with them excitedly over this indecency, stirred from his dreams for once, but he was met by the argument that Clodius himself would have desired nothing better than to embarrass the Optimates even in death. The body therefore, instead of receiving the proper funeral rites at once, was displayed on a bier in the Forum, with Clodius' senatorial robes arranged scantily over it so as by no means to conceal its many wounds.

"There will be an uproar among the people," contended Brutus gloomily.

Since this was exactly what the political allies of Clodius hoped for, they merely shrugged their shoulders and smiled.

The result, however, surpassed their expectations. The bier, which stood on the Rostra a couple of hundred paces from the door of the Senate-house, was soon surrounded by a knot of Clodius' indignant partisans. When the crowd had reached a sufficient size the allies of Clodius, and especially a tribune or two who wished to succeed to his influential

position with Caesar and with the people, made inflammatory speeches, relating with gusto the story of his death, which they had learned from Clodius' slaves. The crowd, all now repeating and discussing at the top of their voices the details of the murder, grew larger and larger as the news spread through the City, but now it was not all on Clodius' side; partisans of Milo halted a moment to take a look at the remains of their patron's enemy, and threw out triumphant jokes on the subject of Clodius' last defeat. It scarcely needed these to point out to the crowd that the removal of Clodius would be a delight to the Optimates majority in the Senate, and a sudden furious storm burst out against this ruling class, whose opponents, as some of the Popular leaders now shouted, always so conveniently died whenever their opposition became really tiresome. With a howl of rage the crowd chased the supporters of Milo from the Forum; sticks and stones flew through the air, heads were broken. These occurrences were so frequent in Rome nowadays, that nobody took much notice of them; shopkeepers sighed and barred their doors, a good many senators decided not to attend the house that day, those in session hurried through the necessary business in order to receive an early dismissal, and that seemed to be all that was necessary. But meanwhile the crowd rushed on to Milo's house, and battered against its walls to such purpose that Milo actually had a flight of spears discharged at them from the roof. Several of the rioters were pierced and fell, and the rest ran back out of range in confusion; but they did not disperse, as was usual at this stage of a City faction tumult.

Their defeat had merely heightened their already ugly mood, for they suspected from the promptitude of Milo's defensive measures the truth, namely that he had collected armed help from many of his Optimates' employers. All the exasperations of the people against the long-enduring muddle of a class ruling in its own interests only, with the feeling that they were sold and betrayed and their leader

murdered for money, that justice would never be done on Milo because he would bribe his way out of it, that the Optimates would be sure to curtail drastically and at once the privileges Clodius had won for them, together with the bad news from Syria and their general poverty and powerlessness—inflamed the Roman citizens almost to madness; while every crowd at Rome nowadays contained discontented elements—veterans tired of dull country life on their patch of land after the excitements of campaigns, broken men, the relics of former conspiracies, runaway slaves—who saw in a riot nothing but their own advantage and an opportunity for plunder. The whole mass therefore rushed back to the Forum for another view of their leader's naked corpse, and the place was rapidly filled from end to end with a seething angry mob, raising a continuous menacing roar of resentment and insult. Frightened by this clamour, the senators in session, in spite of appeals from Cato, hastily fled from the Curia by the further door; at this the mob jeered raucously, and someone shouted :

“We can find a use for the Senate-house if they can't !”

“So we can !” roared the mob, without particularly knowing what it intended.

“Take the benches for a funeral pile !” screamed someone shrilly.

“Take the whole house !” yelled someone else.

“Burn the lot !” shouted yet another.

With an assenting roar the whole mob surged forward, foaming over the tribunes, who were now somewhat alarmed and tried to remonstrate, like waves over a couple of small stones. The bier was carried shoulder high through the crowd and passed into the Senate. In a moment the Curia itself seethed with the maddened crowd; the benches were torn up and thrown in a huge heap in the centre of the assembly hall, the bier of Clodius was laid decently on the summit. In a sudden excess of tender feeling which was the natural

complement of their ferocity, the crowd clamorously demanded that the limbs of the ex-patrician should be reverently straightened and some funerary words pronounced over his corpse; this was done, then a torch passed from hand to hand was applied to the huge pyre. The wood caught and crackled, the flames began to rise; a sudden heavy puff of smoke set everyone coughing and drove them to the door. In a moment, as it seemed, the whole long hall was full of fire, and the flames were licking at the roof; with a sudden thunderous crash an inner wall sank into a mass of broken bricks; the flames leaped up with a roar, and the crowd fled out to the Forum.

The Senate-house burned without a hand being put out to save it; the flames lit up the sky for miles, a pall of acrid smoke drifted sullenly across the sacred seven hills of Rome. The crowd meanwhile, not at all dismayed but rather enjoying the spectacle, decided to hold a funeral feast in honour of Clodius in the Forum, and having looted the neighbouring shops to provide the materials, sat there for the rest of the day, eating and drinking and shouting, quite beyond control.

Indeed nobody attempted to control them; for as the constant rioting had prevented the proper elections, there were at the moment no magistrates in charge, and Rome lay inert at the feet of the mob. A fearful air of gloom and disaster hung over the City; sober citizens barred themselves into their houses and sat in their hall with their family about them, uncertain whether to stay or fly; senators, aghast, sent timid messages to each other asking if any measures had been decided. Cato, having waited with stern propriety for men of higher official rank to take the necessary action, perceived at last that nothing was being done, and went himself to call on Cicero.

He found the orator, with several other Optimates of senatorial rank, standing in a corner of his garden on the Palatine whence there was a clear view of Senate-house and

Forum. Their greetings to him were mumbled, and none could look into the other's eyes as he spoke them; they all turned back at once to gaze upon the terrible spectacle of the perishing of Rome's Curia, the seat of government of the whole civilised world. The flames were now a strong hot red, and devoured the building ruthlessly; even as they looked a remaining archway shrivelled and fell. All these men had supported Milo at one time or another, and all now had a sense of guilt, which they strove to diminish by expressing repeatedly their anger at the excesses of the mob, the story here being that Clodius had made an entirely unprovoked attack on Milo, and had been accidentally killed in the ensuing scuffle by Milo's slaves. Cato alone brushed excuses and accusations aside impatiently and went to the point.

"We must take measures at once to restore order," he announced in his harsh flat tones.

"But what can be done?" said Cicero peevishly, looking very pale. "There are no magistrates, and to hold elections in such a tumult would be madness."

"Summon the Senate, and let there be a decree passed charging Cnaeus Pompeius to see that the City comes to no harm," said Cato bluntly.

"Pompey!" they all exclaimed.

"Who else in Rome has sufficient name and standing to command the support of all parties?" said Cato grimly. "Unless indeed you prefer to recall Caesar." (His hearers winced.) "Pompey alone can restore order quickly by calling up his veterans," continued Cato, "and order we must have at once. The affairs of the Republic can no longer be carried on unless these constant tumults cease."

"It is true that if we don't propose some such appointment to Pompey, the Popular party will very likely do so," said Cato's son-in-law thoughtfully. "And they would make him Dictator."

At the name of this hated office the company started and rustled angrily, like leaves in a breeze.

"They could justify themselves by many examples from olden times," persisted Bibulus. "These constant disturbances in the City demand extraordinary powers."

"It is also true," said Cicero eagerly, "that to offer Pompey such an appointment might bring him over to the Optimates' side. There is no longer Julia beside him to keep him faithful to her father, and rumour says he has refused Caesar's other offers of matrimonial alliances. Moreover, Crassus—no longer concerns us," he finished hastily, afraid to mention the frightful disaster at Carrhae, news of which had a day or two ago reached Rome.

"With such artifices I have nothing to do," said Cato contemptuously. "It is our duty to restore order to the City, whether the necessary measures be painful or no."

His voice was as harsh, but not quite as flatly monotonous, as before, and Cicero, glancing at him, observed that there was actually a slight moisture in his large yellow eyes. Startled and moved, his own facile emotions immediately worked upon, the orator cried: "Marcus Porcius is right, conscript fathers; let us summon the Senate at once."

Pompey, charged by the Senate to restore order in the City, gladly accepted the duty, and, as always when acting under a definite commission, carried it out with promptness and efficiency. He raised levies, brought up troops, and began to settle the City with a strong hand. The disorders continued some little while, however, for the irrepressible Milo, who was positively grateful to the people for having diverted attention from his own minor fault, as he considered it, had the audacity to put forward again his claims to the consulship, and this again put Rome into an uproar. It was obviously necessary to get some supreme magistrates elected promptly. At this point Pompey, urged thereto by Demetrius, began to grumble that he was bearing all the responsibilities of a supreme magistrate, without sharing the dignity and the

name. The Senate had been expecting this, but still could not stomach the notion of a Dictator, so they proposed to elect him consul without colleague—the title was a contradiction in terms, but it served to avoid the odious word and also served to keep out Caesar.

Cato supported this motion in the house, saying in a heavy mournful tone that any form of government was better than no government at all, and that in these distracted times he considered no man fitter to rule than Pompey. After this, from such a determined upholder of the constitution as Cato, there was no more to be said, and the proposal passed. The delighted Pompey rose in the Senate and made the Stoic a cordial acknowledgment. At this Cato, with a return of his customary rudeness, barked out that what he had done he had done for the Republic, not for Pompey; if Pompey's acts as sole consul proved for the good of the Republic, he should praise them, but if not, blame; he himself always acted and spoke for the good of the Republic alone. There was some sniggering, and Pompey flushed a little and sat down looking rather disconcerted, but the proposal was already voted; and Pompey, who still retained Spain as a proconsular province, and as prefect of the corn supply exercised considerable authority in Egypt and the islands, held more power in his hands at that moment than any single man had done since the kings were expelled from Rome.

TWO AND TWO MAKE FOUR

DEMETRIUS, taking some State papers to the sole consul to sign, found his patron at dinner in the house of one of the Optimates party, a scion of one of the oldest families of Rome. It was a dignified entertainment, offered to persons of both sexes; Pompey, who by virtue of his office was reclining in the most honourable position at table, had on his right the daughter of the house, Cornelia; she was talking rapidly and with enthusiasm, and Pompey listened with a pleased smile. Demetrius watched them closely as he stood respectfully proffering the pen, for this young lady had figured a good deal in Pompey's conversation of late; indeed it was in order to see her that Demetrius had delayed the copying of the letters to this hour, and he had his wife's curiosity to satisfy as well as his own. Cornelia was tall and large and very fair, with fine blue eyes and a handsome aquiline face; her hands, which she used to emphasise what she was saying in a strong mannered gesture which was evidently habitual, were white and very well shaped, and she carried her head with an air. She was not quite in her very first youth, being the widow of that young Crassus who was killed in Syria last year, but beside her, as Demetrius noted with a pang of regret, Cnaeus Pompeius looked all his fifty-four years. His hair was becoming a little grizzled, though it still sprang up from his forehead as of yore; and on that forehead three horizontal frowns were very strongly lined, giving him a somewhat pompous and fretful appearance; moreover, he had developed a double chin. But his perplexed brown eyes were all the kinder for the

crows' feet round them, thought Demetrius loyally, and his smile had its old boyish charm. Demetrius sighed a little as he listened to the talk, for he too was getting to an age when peace and comfort began to seem desirable, and the answers he had received from the household slaves about Cornelia rather alarmed him.

"To combat the vulgarity of the times one should not yield a finger to them," Cornelia was saying eagerly: "one should live honestly and austere, adhering strictly to the precepts proved and found good by the experience of the centuries. It is the duty of those whom the gods have favoured with illustrious birth to excel in all the virtues. Do you agree, Cnaeus Pompeius? But I am sure you do!"

"You are a very accomplished young lady," said Pompey simply, with a kind smile. "A blunt soldier like myself has hardly had the opportunity to go into philosophy so deeply."

"For my part, I follow Plato, and regard knowledge as one of the proper virtues of the soul," continued Cornelia: "or, at least, one of its most pleasing ornaments."

She was still speaking in this strain, and Pompey listening with the same pleased and kindly smile, when Demetrius left them and turned homewards.

"Well?" said his wife impatiently.

"She's fair and handsome and very patrician, plays on the lute and understands philosophy," replied Demetrius without enthusiasm. "And rhetoric and geometry, they say," he added mournfully.

His wife looked rather at a loss.

"They were talking about the soul," concluded Demetrius.

"Then he'll marry her," said his wife with conviction.

Demetrius looked gloomy. "If he does he'll go over to the Optimates altogether," he said.

"Why not?" said his wife briskly. "If it's what he really wants."

Demetrius' yellow wrinkled face darkened still further.

"What will happen when Caius Caesar comes home?" he demanded.

His wife paused and considered.

"Perhaps he never will," she suggested hopefully. "He may get killed among those Gauls."

Demetrius sighed and shook his head, muttering something about Caesar's fortune.

The question he had just posed was beginning to agitate all Rome, and continued to do so increasingly. It was now only a couple of years or so to the appointed end of Caesar's command, and what would happen when he returned to Rome was a question which gave sleepless nights, not only to Pompey's freedmen, but to almost every Roman senator, including even Cato. It was true that the Gauls, on hearing of Clodius' death and Pompey's raising of levies, regarding all this as a check to Caesar's prestige, and deciding that he would be detained south of the Alps in Nearer Gaul by the affairs of the City, obligingly revolted, so that Caesar had his hands full again and was a long way off and very busy; but although a good many persons besides the wife of Demetrius thought it would make things very comfortable if he perished in battle, he did nothing of the kind, but continued to win victories and have thanksgivings showered on him by the people, in a manner most annoying to all good Optimates and not really pleasing to Pompey. And the years of his command were running out, and when he came home, he would of course try for the consulship. The people would vote for the hero of Gaul and the head of the Popular party in overwhelming numbers; he was sure to be elected. At the prospect of Caesar as consul the Optimates fairly blanched; he was bad enough last time, but now, with the prestige of all his victories and a huge army of devoted veterans, discharged with a generous donative and scattered about Italy on the land the Senate would be obliged to vote them, he would be appalling: nothing would be safe from him; the safeguards of the Republic's constitution

would be trodden in the dust by his irresistibly powerful foot. As passionately as the Popular party desired another consulship for Caesar, the Optimates dreaded it, and longed to prevent it; and there was one loophole, they knew, through which the thing might be managed. Caesar had formally requested permission to sue for the consulship without appearing personally in Rome. If he were allowed to do this, as sure as eggs were eggs he would be elected, become consul before he left his army, and therefore never be in an unofficial position; when alone he was liable to impeachment. If, however, the law decreeing the necessity of a personal candidature were enforced, and Caesar had to leave his army before securing election, then there would be a gap of several months when he would be a mere private person, lacking office, and could be attacked in the courts. How joyously would not Cato and his friends draw up that indictment! What prolonged and huge illegalities could they not find to cite! The judges, chosen from the senatorial rank, would be largely unfavourable in advance, and the rest could be bribed; Caesar could be condemned, exiled, ruined. If they dared, then, by enforcing the personal candidature law or by juggling with the date of Caesar's return, the Optimates could secure all they wanted, by legal if not by equitable methods. But dared they? If every senator voted as his political beliefs, and not as fear or interest, led him, the Optimates had a majority in the Senate. But dared they do anything so drastic against the conqueror of Gaul and the head of the Popular party? For most of them the answer lay in the man who now held so much power in Rome, namely Pompey; and they turned their eyes on him expectantly.

Pompey was enjoying himself, occupying the position to which he had always felt he was entitled, at the head of the State. He enjoyed the sense of power it gave; but he enjoyed too the feeling of being in harbour, of being safe at last after many years' stormy wandering. He enjoyed the Optimates'

conciliatory smiles and speeches; he liked having entertainments given in his honour by the best families in Rome. As the wife of Demetrius had prophesied, he presently married Cornelia, and spent some happy hours with her in the country, refreshing himself with books and music. Cato snorted indignantly at such behaviour by the man to whom the whole State had been entrusted in an hour of crisis—and with a girl young enough to be his daughter, too ! Disgusting ! The other Optimates implored Cato to moderate these criticisms, however, foreseeing how useful it might be that Pompey should ally himself matrimonially to one of their party instead of to Caesar, and Cato consented to be mollified when Pompey presently shared his consulship with Cornelia's father. Indeed Pompey, wedding celebrations or no, was doing his very best to justify the trust the Senate had placed in him. He saw to it that the trial of Milo was conducted promptly and strictly, surrounding the court with soldiers for that purpose; Cicero, who had prepared a magnificent speech in defence of his useful friend, was so alarmed by the sight of them that he couldn't deliver it; that eloquent mouth stammered a few incoherent words and was still. It was a good joke against Cicero, and probably made no difference to the verdict, but a few sober people shook their heads over the incident, and thought it did not speak well for the state of Rome, when arms ruled even in a court of law. Milo was condemned, but so also were the Popular leaders of the riot and fire; people praised Pompey for this impartiality, and the City itself began to settle down.

When it came to making this calm permanent by a few well-chosen political reforms, however, he was not so successful. With a view to checking ambition he secured the passing of a law by which no one was to take a province till the fifth year after laying down his consulship. In order to fill up the provinces for the coming year, the Senate therefore had recourse to men who had held consular office in the

past. Cicero was one of the senior of these, and not without a secret amusement on the part of the Senate, he was asked whether he would allow his name to be put in the urn or no. The unhappy Cicero was thus faced with the prospect of drawing by lot a remote and barbaric province and being obliged to leave his beloved City; on the other hand, his encouragement of Milo and its unfortunate results had somewhat lowered his influence, which a successful provincial administration might restore. Moreover, if he accepted the lot and went to a province, he would be absent from Rome while the highly uncomfortable question of Caesar's candidature for the consulship was decided. This last consideration turned the scale; Cicero allowed his name to go to the urn, and on receiving a mountainous, wild and restless province in Asia, withdrew to it without any public grumbling. This outwardly dignified acceptance of a distasteful task for the good of the Republic threw into an unfavourable light Pompey's attitude to his own province of Spain, which he continued to retain and govern from Rome, being thus consul and proconsul at the same time, in defiance of all legality. Indeed Pompey had a knack of contravening his own laws. He passed a law limiting speeches in the courts—and sent down a written speech of his own on behalf of a friend; a law forbidding processions testifying to an accused's character—and arranged such a procession on behalf of Cornelia's father. Pompey always quite honestly felt that the case in question was a special case, and was astonished and indignant when others disagreed with him. Whenever he secured the passing of a law he felt happy in the approbation of the Senate; whenever he was criticised for breaking one he sulked mutinously, and thought with longing of the high-handed methods of Caesar.

His handling of the matter of Caesar's consulship vacillated correspondingly. Caesar wrote to remind him that, as arranged at Luca, he must be excepted from personal candidature, and Pompey procured a tribune to introduce the

necessary bill; very soon after, however, Pompey passed a law condemning all irregular candidatures and appointments. Caesar, on hearing this—though engaged in so desperate a struggle at the moment with the Gauls that only the most devoted messengers would have undertaken to cross the country at all—wrote a charmingly urbane letter pointing out that Pompey had forgotten to except his case from the new legislation. With the letter came, by Caesar's instructions, a copy of the early chapters of his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*. This fine brief sketch of military achievement excited Pompey in spite of himself; he could not withhold his admiration as a soldier for the victories, and as a reader for the skill of their narration. In the evening he requested Demetrius to read some chapters of the *Commentaries* aloud to himself and Cornelia, and explained the strategical points to his wife with gusto.

"My first husband and I," commented Cornelia thoughtfully in her rather loud but agreeable and well-bred tones—the tones of a person whose right to speak on all subjects and in all places is on account of the speaker's rank unquestioned—"never agreed about Caius Caesar. Publius admired him greatly. I recognised his skill as a soldier—though I could not, naturally, appreciate the minutiae of his achievements as can a general of your great fame and experience, Cnaeus—but his personal history always struck me as revolting. Such base treachery, in a man of his birth, to set himself against the traditions of his class! The stories they tell of his conduct in Bithynia, too, and his many amours in Rome, are highly disagreeable. He seems to me a degenerate profligate of a kind quite unfit to be received in decent Roman society. He writes the Latin language with purity and elegance, certainly; but his undoubted talents make his moral delinquency all the more deplorable."

"You express what I have often felt, but never found words for," said Pompey, feeling soothed and gratified.

Not for the first time he reflected that it was a great relief

to be married to Cornelia. There was no joyous excitement about it, as with Julia, but then there was no uncertainty either; one knew where one was, and everything was carried on in a decent and orderly fashion, according to the rules of good Roman society; he had observed that his very household slaves had become more diligent and formal under Cornelia's rule. With her strict notions of duty and piety, too, Cornelia had even directed her attention to the sons of Pompey and Mucia, who in the varying matrimonial and political activities of their father had been allowed to grow up somewhat rough and neglected. The two young men resented their stepmother's efforts, and said so rudely; nevertheless their knowledge of the ordinary usages of civilised society improved. It was only Demetrius who unfortunately seemed to grow less comfortable with his new mistress as the months went on. Disliking his flaccid yellow skin and paunchy body, Cornelia thought him lazy, undignified, and not always even very clean, and deplored his influence over Pompey, while Demetrius often failed to catch the sense of the long words she used, and as she spoke rather fast, was apt to gape at her piteously. Cornelia had very strict notions of her duty to her dependants, however, and always treated Demetrius with condescending kindness, but this was not at all what Demetrius was accustomed to, he resented it and struggled against it, with increasing bitterness and increasing ill-success. There had even been one wretched evening when Demetrius wept to Pompey about some arrangement of his for Pompey's comfort on a journey which Cornelia had countermanded; "I am an old man now, Magnus," wailed the freedman, "but surely I know your tastes and habits—I have grown old in your service. I am an old man now, I know, but——" "Nonsense, nonsense!" said the soft-hearted Pompey uncomfortably—but from that day forward he somehow fell into the way of regarding Demetrius as an old man, and did not consult him as much as formerly.

Listening wide-eyed to Cornelia's comments on Caesar now, Demetrius sighed, looked deprecatingly at his patron, and thought with regret of Julia. Pompey saw his look and guessed his thought, angrily put away the memory of Julia because it hurt too much, commanded Demetrius somewhat crossly to cease his reading, and begged Cornelia to play to him. Her performance on the lute was highly tasteful, if a little lacking in sweetness; Pompey's senses were not melted into forgetfulness, and he was able to meditate on Caesar. He owed Caesar much—or wasn't it Caesar who owed much to him? His indecision on this point was a sore which festered.

Pompey presently announced in public his regret for having forgotten to except the candidature of Caesar from the new legislation, and had a clause added for the purpose—but he did not bring this clause before Senate or people for confirmation, so it had no real force in law. The significance of this piece of manœuvring dawned only slowly both on Pompey himself, who had executed it without quite knowing why, and on the Optimates; but presently they both perceived that they had known for some time that Pompey was rather inclined to break with Caesar. On this, Cato positively asked him to dine—the meal was so “old Roman” as to be execrable, and Cato was not an easy host; but there was a kind of heartiness and warmth about him in his own home, with his son and daughter at his side, which pleased Pompey; he gave Cornelia an amused account of the proceedings and they laughed over Cato together, but all the same Pompey felt himself honoured.

And indeed why not break with Caesar, mused Pompey. There was no longer the great wealth of Crassus to be feared, which would always have been thrown on the side of Caesar if the pair had quarrelled. I've wasted too much of my life hanging on the wishes of that disreputable sedition-monger, thought Pompey, a traitor to his rank, as Cornelia says. What has he ever done for me beside ally me with himself

and Crassus, both of whom I have always most cordially disliked? He has estranged me from my true friends, made me appear neglectful of the interests of the Republic, put me in a most uncomfortable position as regards the Senate—and for what? Only such honours as I could well have secured for myself. He will return from Gaul and take the consulship and hold a tremendous triumph—and what shall I be then? whispered an obscure voice in his heart to Pompey. But if he broke with Caesar, what allies would be left him? Could the Optimates be relied on to support him firmly? He hesitated between two policies, and the Senate followed his waverings.

The result was a prolonged procrastination. The crucial question was always just about to be brought to a vote, but for years never quite reached one. Motions on the point were refused, amended, accepted only when they had lost their sting; sittings of the Senate were postponed, tribunician vetoes invited, as convenience required. Cicero had a way of selecting resolutions which clarified the issues and helped men to make up their minds; but Cicero was in Asia, writing home vainglorious despatches over which the Senate secretly sniggered. Somehow or other in the course of the long discussion the matter gradually changed its name; from being a question of the date when Caesar was to leave his command in Gaul it became a question of when Caesar should dismiss his army, and, presently, of when Caesar should lay down his arms. This might mean the same thing, but it had a different sound, and presently came to have a different meaning too, and called for different measures.

There was the business, for example, of the legions required for Syria. The frightful defeat of Carrhae necessitated some steps to restore the prestige of Rome in Asia, and the Senate decreed for this purpose the sending of two legions from those already in existence; one to come from Caesar's army in Gaul, the other from the forces controlled by Pompey in Spain. But Pompey had lent a legion to Caesar a year or

two ago when Caesar was temporarily in difficulties, so he decided to send that one to Syria; this in effect, as everyone saw, was to take two legions from his rival. When Cato heard of this proceeding he cried indignantly:

"What right has one man to lend legions to another? All legions are in the service of the Republic."

To the Optimates this seemed quite off the point, and just like Cato; they chuckled secretly over Pompey's astuteness.

Demetrius however was overwhelmed by the news—nowadays he rarely heard Pompey's important decisions till they were taken. The freedman sat up in bed, his flabby body hunched and uncomfortable, till far into the night, arguing it over with his wife, and worrying.

"Lie down and sleep," she urged him soothingly.

"I can't, I can't," wailed Demetrius. "To take his legions! From Caius Caesar! He'll never suffer it! Two legions! Caesar! They'll come to blows, those two," he added, turning a piteous face to her. "Note well my words; they'll come to blows, Cnaeus Pompeius and Caius Caesar."

"The Republic and Magnus will conquer," said his wife.

Demetrius sighed. "Perhaps," he said.

"Of course they will," said his wife soothingly. "Now sleep."

Demetrius lay down, but in a moment started up again. "If they fight my heart will break," he said excitedly. "I'm not young now, and I shan't be able to watch it patiently."

"Come, come," his wife soothed him: "You may never see it."

Her words came true in another sense than she intended, for in the morning Demetrius was in a fever. His yellow cheeks burned, his lips were cracked, he talked wildly about things which had happened in his Grecian home, long ago, before he was a slave. Pompey sent him his own physician, and when a day or two passed and Demetrius did not reappear, spared time from his business in the Senate to go and see him. The sick man did not seem to know him at

first, gazed at him wildly and wandered in his talk; but the familiar presence soothed him back to the rational and soon the two men spoke of many things which they had done together in times past, and grew to their old friendliness again. Traversing their history thus, they arrived by natural steps at the present, and a look of terror suddenly flashed into Demetrius' still beautiful almond-shaped eyes. He put out a yellow shrivelled hand to Pompey.

"The legions? From Caesar? Is there a letter?" he gasped fearfully.

Pompey said: "No," stiffly, in the way he had when a subject was displeasing to him, and Demetrius, who knew that way so well, sighed and lay back, shaking his head.

"I have tried to serve you well, Cnaeus Pompeius," he murmured presently.

"You have served me long and faithfully," said Pompey, much affected. "But why speak so? You will serve me well again."

Demetrius again shook his head. "No," he whispered. "This is the last time I shall see you." He nerved himself to a great effort, raised himself on his elbows and cried in a loud clear tone his supreme flattery: "I die happy to see you safely established in the position your talents merit, Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus, at the head of the Roman State."

Three days later he was dead.

Cornelia conferred suitably with his widow about the funeral rites proper for a man of his race, and Pompey missed a session of the Senate to attend the funeral himself. But they were both too deeply engrossed in affairs of State to miss Demetrius greatly. An eloquent tribune—it was hinted that he had been bought by Caesar for a colossal sum, but he was worth it; it was highly exasperating to Pompey how well Caesar's agents always did their jobs—was pressing for a vote to be taken on a proposition very awkward for Pompey and the most extreme of the Optimates: namely that the order to Caesar to lay down his arms

should be extended to Pompey too. Let them both give up their exceptional positions, said the tribune glibly, and thus restore the Republic to a regular constitutional state of affairs. This proposal had such a specious air that Pompey and his friends were really afraid to let it come to a vote, and did all they could to postpone it.

Meanwhile the official reply arrived from Gaul about the two legions for Syria. Caesar wrote politely, though perhaps a little coldly, that it was somewhat inconvenient for him to spare two legions, but the arrangement was perfectly equitable, and he should neglect nothing in the interest of the State. He had therefore despatched the legions, having first given them a suitable present in farewell. Pompey, a little disconcerted—somehow one could not put Caesar in the wrong—came from his study and gave the despatch to Cornelia to read.

"But, my dear Cnaeus, he writes as though he were your equal!" she exclaimed in tones of amused indignation.

A dark flush of anger slowly coloured Pompey's cheek.

The question of Caesar's command and consulship had been formally placed on the Senate's agenda for the day following. The proposal that the proconsuls of Spain and Gaul should both be called on to resign their offices was so strongly supported that the presiding officer could not but put it to the vote, and to Pompey's fury the measure was passed by an overwhelming majority.

"But it's absurd—the cases of Caesar and myself are not at all similar!" spluttered Pompey angrily, in conference later with the leaders of the Optimates. "It is not for the good of the Republic that I should give up my commands. The decree is the result of bribery and a snatch division. Caesar is a danger to the State; I, its defender."

"You mean, then, to disobey the decree?" said Cato bluntly, noting with satisfaction this, the first open expression of antagonism to Caesar he had heard from Pompey. "And save the Republic in spite of itself?"

Pompey looked down his nose and was haughtily silent—he could never find an answer to direct questions of this kind. But he did not lay down his commands, and the majority which had passed the bill in the Senate, falling apart at once into their various shades of opinion and degrees of courage, could find neither the means, nor, in view of the menace of Caesar, the wish, to make him. The incident served, however, though clumsily, to clarify the situation which had slowly formed; henceforward Pompey was on the Optimates' side, the declared enemy of Caesar.

The slaves told Mark Antony that Servilia was expecting him, and led him at once into her room. It opened on to the peristyle, where there were roses and ivy and pillars and fountains and bronzes, all very refined and pretty though rather chaste for his fancy, thought Antony; and the same applied to the delicate wall-paintings of flowers and birds in the room. There were also flowers growing in boxes, and silk cushions of a very pale grey, rather odd—of course you would expect her to have *something* a bit different about her, thought Antony, seeing Caesar's kept to her so. At this moment Servilia's grave pure voice sounded in greeting, and Antony turned his hard experienced look eagerly upon her.

"What under the moon does Caesar see in her?" he thought at once, deeply disappointed—he hardly knew what he had expected from a woman whom, he understood, Caesar had loved for many years, but certainly something out of the ordinary. This Servilia was quite old! Well over forty, anyway. She had a kind of chilly beauty, perhaps, like something drawn on ivory, very pale and clear; a very good shape, too, and her dark hair still thick and lustrous. But she was grave and cold and stately, instead of young and passionate—difficult to imagine her in the act of love, thought Antony. However, if Caesar liked them that kind,

it was not for Antony to question his general's taste. "Behave now ! No camp manners here !" he admonished himself, and saluted Servilia very respectfully. She would have understood, he intoned in a formal voice, from his general's letter which he had had the honour to present to her, that Caius Caesar had instructed him to call upon her and inform her of the military progress of her son who was in Gaul with him, the young Silanus.

"His father and I are deeply obliged to you," replied Servilia. "My husband is at the Senate this morning, but I will let him know your kindness." She asked him to be seated and sent for wine. "I believe we have not met before, though I have the honour of knowing your mother. My son is well ?" she said.

"Oh, yes. Very well," replied Antony, unable at the moment to remember a single item of all those with which he had primed himself about young Silanus—the lad was a bit of a nincompoop anyway, and not of the slightest importance in the army. "Very well," he repeated emphatically. "He carries out all his military duties with the greatest courage and attention." He was pleased with this last sentence, which he remembered from often having read it in despatches, but could think of nothing more, and sat there silent and stiff, feeling uncomfortable in his dress of ceremony—it was years since he had worn a toga.

Servilia perceived that Caesar had sent this young man to her to talk of himself, not of the young Decius; she smiled, and asked quietly :

"How long have you been with Caius Caesar ? You are his quaestor, I believe ?"

"Yes—I've been with him in Gaul three years now, getting on for four," said Antony, greatly relieved at the turn of the conversation : "Quaestor for the last two. The cavalry's my line, you know."

"So I have heard from Caius Julius," said Servilia.

"Have you ?" cried Antony. He coloured hotly with

pleasure, and, looking away from her in a sudden embarrassment, mumbled something about being very proud—very glad. "I've commanded the left wing in set battles, twice," he added eagerly, turning to her again for approval.

Servilia was moved by his obvious devotion to Caesar—it seemed to bring her lover near, to drag him across all those miles of hills and forest and put him here where she so longed for him, here in her room. "I am rather ignorant of military matters, but I should like to hear if you care to tell me," she said in her quiet tones.

Antony embarked on a lively description very heartily, but he soon saw that she did not understand the military terms—how should she?—and was shuddering at the bloodshed.

"But such tales are not for women's ears," he broke off in contempt, abruptly.

There was a pause; then Servilia asked: "And what does the army as a whole think of Caesar? There is some talk here——"

"*Think of Caesar?*" interrupted Antony in amazement, staring at her. Really, how could one convey one's meaning to a woman as stupid as this? "The army is Caesar's," he blurted, quite embarrassed by her silliness.

"I see," said Servilia. "And you?" she added courteously after a pause. "You are in Rome on furlough?"

"Well, not exactly," explained Antony, his talk flowing again when practical affairs were on hand. "I've come to seek election as a tribune. All this nonsense about not allowing Caesar to stand for the consulship without leaving Gaul—it shows he must have someone he can trust always on the tribunician bench, to be ready to interpose their veto if necessary. This year of course he's——" He was about to say: "bought a tribune," but he felt that this was not what Servilia would wish to hear, and modified it to: "he has a friendly tribune he can rely on, already elected. But for the following year he wants to have me. This business about

the two legions for Syria," he added in a tone of angry contempt: "There's a dirty trick for you! And will they ever get to Syria? I shall believe it when I see it. No! Pompey'll keep them handy here in Italy; he's not such a fool as to let them go, even if he is taking lessons in the art of speaking."

"Lessons in the art of speaking!" repeated Servilia, bewildered.

"They say so—some of our party are giving him a hot time in the Senate over Caesar's consulship, so he's taking lessons in speaking to be able to reply to them," said Antony, laughing heartily.

"But why should Cnaeus Pompeius retain the legions in Italy?" said Servilia, puzzled.

Antony looked at her, suddenly sobered.

"To use against Caesar," he said at last quietly.

"To use against Caesar!" cried Servilia in anguish.

"Well, it may not come to that," said Antony hastily in a soothing tone. "Caesar will settle it peacefully if he can. He is always very ready to make concessions and settle things peacefully—too ready, some of us think in Gaul; it often means we have to fight the battles all over again."

Servilia, not reassured, gazed at him with a deep concern in her grave grey eyes, and Antony fidgeted under her look uncomfortably. To his great relief a sudden deep baying echoed in the room at this point. Servilia started.

"One of my dogs," explained Antony rapidly. "A Molossian hound. I have a pair waiting for me. Perhaps I had better—your slaves may not—" He rose, delighted with the excuse to leave.

Servilia did not try to detain him.

"You are always welcome here, Marcus Antonius," she said formally.

"Thanks," said Antony briefly. He thought to himself: "It will be a very long time before I come here again if I can help it," and Servilia read his thought, and was sorry.

How strange it seemed to think of Caius surrounded by men of this kind, living his life amongst them for nearly nine years ! She looked at Antony's thick bronze curls, which half covered his low brow, his handsome sensual face and strong sinewy body, remembered his swaggering gait and loud florid speech. How could the Caesar she knew take pleasure in the society of such a man ! Yet Caius had sent this man to her, must think there was some unusual quality in him. Had he perhaps changed, grown different, was he no longer the man she loved ? At the thought a cold hand seemed laid on her heart, and she broke from her usual reserve and said quickly :

" Has he changed much ? "

" Your son ? O, he's growing a good deal taller," invented Antony carelessly.

" I meant Caius Caesar," said Servilia.

" Change ! Caesar !" exclaimed Antony, colouring angrily. " How could he change ? Caesar !" Something in her look, a softening in the ivory, told him she was glad of what he said, and he thought : " She loves him. Well, so she should, by Venus !" But he felt drawn to her for loving Caesar, and burst out suddenly : " You know, it sounds so strange to hear people in Rome speaking of Caesar as though he were an ordinary person. With us, he's—well ! But they'll learn here too," he concluded truculently.

From force of habit he felt for his sword to back his sentiments, and finding only the folds of his toga at his hip instead, hitched them up impatiently.

While they were standing thus together in leave-taking attitudes, Brutus entered. The two young men, who were much of an age, took an instant dislike to each other ; what a brute, thought Servilia's son fastidiously, wincing from the soldier's coarse vitality ; what a nincompoop, contemptuously thought Antony. Servilia quietly made them known. He's not Caesar's son, whatever they say, judged the soldier shrewdly. He made his farewells and left, and

to Servilia and Brutus it was as though some rank animal had been withdrawn, leaving the air sweeter.

"You entertain strange guests, mother," said Brutus distastefully, seating himself on the marble bench beside her. His attitude, with bent head and hands clasped loosely between his knees, was dejected, and his tone sombre. Servilia, under the guise of a motherly caress straightening his thick tumbled hair, gently rallied him.

"Why so sad?" she asked.

"Who was that fellow went out just now?" enquired Brutus, evading her question.

"Marcus Antonius, Caius Caesar's quaestor—he came to tell me Decius' news," replied his mother.

"Decius—Caius Caesar," repeated Brutus, smiling. "When I was a lad I was very jealous of your affection for those two, mother."

Servilia was silent; and not for the first time felt a deep wound in her heart. To conceal from her son, to be unable to return him candour for candour—this was perhaps the greatest sacrifice she had made for Caesar.

"Why are you so sad this sunny afternoon?" she repeated lightly. His face darkened, and she perceived that he was really in trouble. "Tell me, my son," she said in a tender loving tone.

"Mother, I'm so dissatisfied with my life!" burst out Brutus, throwing up his head. "The years go by, and I do nothing, nothing. When Cassius and I were boys together, he was no cleverer than I; indeed our teachers said I had the quicker mind. But Cassius succeeds; he is quaestor here, and in command there; he rescues the Syrian army and keeps provinces to their loyalty; he is of service to the Republic in a hundred ways. I seem to do nothing—I am elected to minor offices at the bottom of the poll, and do nothing with them when I have them. What is there for me to do? I cannot run about bribing my way into lucrative commands, and trying to cheat the City's treasury. Yet surely I have qualities

which could serve the State? Cassius is happy, too, in his marriage with my sister," he went on hurriedly, overriding an exclamation from his mother: "But I—I am only happy here," he finished in a murmur, looking away.

Servilia sighed. She had never entertained much hope of Brutus' marriage—his passing fancy for a pretty face, and the girl's passing interest in his serious ways, which were a novelty to her, had been exploited at a rush by the Claudian family, who thought him an advantageous political connection on account of her own relations with Caesar. As she remembered her own marriages, both dictated by the political convenience of her male relatives, and the incessant and determined efforts which had lately been necessary on her part to gain Tertia the man she loved, and prevent her younger daughter from being married off in her teens to a consular of sixty, bitter words rose to her lips against the current degradation of the marriage-tie; under such conditions, she felt, it was hardly reasonable to expect the supply of noble Roman matrons to be maintained.

"I seem to be such a fool in everyday affairs," continued Brutus ruefully, before she could speak. "And the more I try to be practical, the worse stupidities I commit. You remember Cassius urged me to lend some money to the town of Salamis in Cyprus—I was unwilling at the time, because it's against the law for senators to lend money to provincial municipalities, and I had to get special permission from the Senate—but he said to refuse was foolish and unpractical, so I agreed and lent. Now, they haven't paid the interest lately, and I wrote to Cicero asking him to see to the matter, as Cyprus is in his province. He sent me such cold replies that I grew angry, and pressed the matter; and now what do you think I find? That my agent out there was asking four times the legal rate of interest! Forty-eight per cent! What Cicero must think of me," said Brutus in a tone of anguish, "I cannot imagine! Or rather, I can imagine only too well. If I explain the matter I seem an egregious fool,

if I do not, a rogue. And to Cicero, whom I admire so much as orator and writer ! And it's always so," he cried passionately, springing to his feet and pacing the room. "I am always being duped and practised on—I am serviceable neither to myself nor to the State. Yet am I such a fool ? Do I lack intelligence, courage, good feeling towards my fellow-men ? You know I do not, mother !" besought the young man, pausing in front of her appealingly.

"My son," said Servilia, appraising his gentle sensitive face and dreamy eyes: "Your qualities do not fit the times in which you live."

"Then are the times wrong, or I ?" said Brutus with an angry laugh, throwing himself down again beside her.

"Noble virtues can only serve a noble State," said Servilia. She wondered as she spoke from whom she had heard this sentiment before—and exclaimed softly as she remembered that it was Caesar. Yes, in the country that first evening they met, when he was telling her his ambitions, he had spoken exactly so, explaining that he meant to give Rome a government fit for the noble to live under. Alas ! A great deal of water had flowed down the Tiber since Caesar was that young man. Servilia's face showed the sudden sadness of her thought, and Brutus asked quickly:

"Are you ill ?"

"No. I thought of the troubles and difficulties of the Republic," said Servilia, "and wondered what chance we have of creating a nobler form of government."

"We shall do well if we retain the forms we have," said Brutus. "There is a rumour that Caesar is moving legions into Nearer Gaul."

"I don't believe it !" cried Servilia

"Nor I—but it shows what people expect," observed her son. "You always defend Caius Caesar, mother; but if he resorts to force now, whatever the provocation from Pompey, he will do wrong, and his success will debauch the State."

The young man's tone was as firm and assured now as it had been doubtful when he spoke of magistracies and money, and his mother gazed at him in mingled pride and anxiety.

"But if Caesar means to improve the State—make it finer, nobler; give true liberty to the people?" she urged, though in truth her son's ideas marched with her own, for she had formed them

"True liberty can only be taken, never given. It is the harmony of equals, not the gift of a superior," said Brutus firmly.

On the first day of the following year, the tribune Marcus Antonius with some difficulty secured the ear of the Senate, and began to read a letter from Caius Julius Caesar.

Antony was fully conscious of his great responsibility, and the importance of the occasion; all the hesitations, the waverings back and forth, the uncertainties and the irritations of the past three years had at length created a state of affairs when the most determined of the Optimates had empowered Pompey to hold levies and make military preparations all over Italy, with the intention of compelling Caesar to lay down his arms by a fixed date. Would the Senate confirm this to-day in a legal vote, or would it accept one of Caesar's constantly offered compromises? The letter Antony was now reading contained positively the last possible concessions which Caesar could offer—in Antony's opinion he went much too far, withdrawing all his demands on Pompey and offering to dismiss eight of his ten legions instantly; "but there's no need to worry," thought Antony, "for they won't accept them. Pompey's so ashamed of having kept those two Syrian legions back, at Capua, that he's determined to justify it by having a fight." The immediate necessity was to read this letter well, making it

sound perfectly clear and also sincere, so that it might impress the people listening on the steps, if not the Senate. Antony had practised the letter several times during the night, and read it now sonorously. He could see that the Senate as a whole was rather surprised by the decorum and effectiveness of his speech, and he smiled to himself rather grimly; he knew that those bearded old dullards thought little of him on account of his dogs and his women and his drinking—"but they don't know me," thought Antony, remembering his battles: "Caesar does. Caesar never mistakes a man's worth." The sentences as he read them were so like Caesar—cool and quiet and rather witty, but as hard as stone—that he fell into Caesar's way of speaking them, and forebore his usual flourishes. As he went on reading, the terms sounded so reasonable that he thought to himself: "After all I don't see how they *can* refuse them——" and he felt rather despondent, for he wanted to fight.

He finished the letter; there was considerable applause from some sections of the listening people, which drowned the feebler response from the Senate. Antony became himself again, swaggered his broad shoulders and put his hand to his hip, as he shouted out his formal request that Caesar's letter might now come up for discussion. "Yes! Consult! Consult!" shouted various senators, friends of Caesar and members of the Popular party.

To Antony's amazement the presiding magistrate, after a whispered consultation with Pompey's father-in-law—Pompey himself was not in the Senate—declined to take opinions on the proposals of Caesar.

"What!" shouted Antony, lurching to his feet again. "Not consult? But it's grossly unfair! It's an insult!" he bellowed, remembering just in time to restrain his gesture that he was in a toga and wearing no sword. His friends pulled him down and urged discretion. "But it's not honest!" objected Antony. "Why should a fat old hen with a bandaged leg dictate to the Senate?" This irreverent

description of Pompey set the tribunes tittering, and Antony in a better humour received the magistrate's rebuke for disturbing the assembly, silently. The business before the Senate, announced the magistrate, was the time and manner in which the proconsul of Gaul should be required to lay down his command and dismiss his army; the subject had often been discussed before, but must come to a decision to-day. "Well, if the decree is too unfavourable we can always veto it," said Antony comfortably to the tribune next him, like himself a Caesarian.

He was hard put to it, however, to sit still through the proceedings which followed. Pompey's father-in-law—who, as everyone knew, spoke for Pompey—promptly proposed that Caesar should dismiss his army by a certain day, and should he not do so, should be considered an enemy of the Republic. ("Jupiter!" exclaimed Antony at this in an unsubdued tone: "Do enemies of the Republic give it a whole conquered nation as a present?") Milder opinions were from time to time expressed, but they were beaten down, and the whole Senate thoroughly bullied, by Cornelia's father and by Cato. Hostility to Caesar was expressed in every line of Cato's square high-coloured face, every blunt caustic word he uttered.

"No treacherous profligate generals can dictate to Rome," he shouted—and his use of the hated word *dictate* was clever—"if we stand firm and vote with the resolute boldness due to the Roman people and our ancestors."

The votes of the extremists of both parties nothing could alter, but Cato's violence overawed the moderate men whose minds were doubtful; frightened and harassed, they repaired to the side of Cato and Pompey, and the insulting motion was carried by an unquestionable majority.

"We interpose our veto!" cried Antony and his Caesarian colleague, rising together at once.

"Deprive them of office for hindering the business of the Republic!" shouted Cato.

"The tribunes' right of veto is sacred, Cato!" cried Antony's friend.

"I demand that you take a vote on my proposal!" shouted Cato with all his might.

"You're trying to preserve our liberties by depriving us of them, Marcus Porcius!" cried another tribune angrily.

"This shall teach you manners!" shouted Antony menacingly, feeling for his sword.

At this gesture the whole Senate fell into an uproar; men rose excitedly in all parts of the house, shouting and gesticulating wildly in various senses, while the listening people without added their clamour to the scene. Cato continued to shout his demand for a vote on his proposal, however, and receiving a timid nod from the presiding magistrate, held up his hand for attention and cried: "To me! To me!" A scene of apparent turbulence resulted as the excited members rushed across the floor to side with or against him; his majority was scarcely as decided as that for the previous proposal against Caesar, but the deposition of the two tribunes was certainly voted. A body of guards approached Antony and his colleague, to arrest them; they broke through the crowd and fled.

Pompey and Cato spent the next few days collecting Caesar's enemies from all sides and haranguing their own friends into a suitable firmness. Pompey through his father-in-law made it clear that it was now or never with him; if the Optimates stood firm now, he would support their cause, if not, he still had means of making friends with Caesar. In a packed Senate he repeated this, and the threat was certainly alarming to all lovers of the Republic. In the course of the debate, tidings arrived that the deposed tribunes had fled towards Caesar, who, it was said, was stationed at Ravenna. As Ravenna was the most southerly town of importance in his province, the nearest to Italy, this sounded sufficiently ominous, and some of the more timid Optimates suggested that, while accepting the aid of

Cnaeus Pompeius and pushing on rapidly with their preparations, it would be well to do nothing further openly against Caesar till the new levies came in. What forces were there, they enquired, which could be directed against Caesar at once if necessary? Everyone looked expectantly at Pompey, who replied haughtily, angry that his influence with his veterans should be disparaged:

"Wherever I stamp my foot in Italy, soldiers will spring from the soil."

In a more sober but still irritated tone he added that he had ten legions ready and willing for battle, and that Caesar's troops, he knew on unimpeachable authority, were completely disaffected.

He did not name the authority referred to, but Cato hinted the truth, that it was Labienus.

The Senate, thoroughly excited, and in the absence of any strong lead from the peace-loving Cicero—who, having only just returned from Asia, was still completely bewildered by the position of affairs—without waiting for Caesar's reply to the previous decree or even officially communicating it to him, declared the Republic in danger, and passed the ultimate decree of the Senate: *that the consuls, praetors, tribunes of the people and all proconsuls in the City, should make it their care that the Republic receive no harm.*

Caesar, when the flight of the tribunes was told him by a messenger, quietly gave some orders, and the thirteenth legion—it was the only one at hand; he was sending for the others—fell into line and marched out of Ravenna by the north gate, promptly.

"You will not leave the province till I come," said Caesar to the commanding officer. "There may be further letters from Cnaeus Pompeius, or the Senate."

The officer saluted and withdrew. All his men—who of

course had heard of the Senate's decree and were furious about it; the whole town seethed with the insult to their beloved general—had a sly eager look as though they suspected something unusual in the wind, as they assembled; and their jaws quite dropped with disappointment when he gave the order to march north. He couldn't help giving them a wink and a smile as they went by out of barracks, and they all grinned back; he put his finger on his lip as if by accident, and their grins widened. When they had marched a couple of miles from the town he turned them off into by-roads, on the other side of the pine forest, out of sight of Ravenna, and gradually headed them south—for south lay Italy.

Having arranged these matters to his satisfaction, Caesar spent the day inspecting the plans and site of a new amphitheatre he proposed to build in Ravenna, and then watched the gladiatorial school at play, and received a considerable number of the usual visits of respect. He was his wonted urbane and charming self, a little wittier and more talkative perhaps even than was customary with him; not even the few who knew his plans, noticed the restlessness which he kept so well under control. To Caesar however the day seemed endless; he felt that the sun had never been so long in setting before. He had invited guests to dinner, and was very lively with them through a couple of courses, so that everyone thought matters could not be as bad as they sounded between him and the Senate; but Philemon had instructions to come in as soon as the dusk fell, and draw him from the room with news of important papers; and presently he entered and did as he was bid, acting his part well, as Greeks do. Caesar rose cheerfully, though his lower jaw quivered a little suddenly, as it had been wont to do in moments of excitement, of late; he smiled at them all, taking care to catch the eyes of each so that none should feel slighted, and excused himself politely for leaving them for a while.

"I beg you to remain here and take your pleasure till I return," he said in his most affable tone.

They all stood respectfully while he withdrew.

As soon as the sounds of talk broke out again behind him, and the slaves began to be busy serving the next course, Caesar threw on a dark cloak and went out quietly into a side street. A hired carriage, yoked serviceably and unostentatiously with mules, stood there, as he had commanded, and a small group of men, his devoted personal staff. Caesar climbed into the carriage and settled his cloak; he noticed that one of the torches was not burning very brightly, but decided that it could not be remedied now. He gave the order, and the carriage rolled off. A few citizens of Ravenna were still taking the air in their doorways, but the children had gone to bed and the streets were fairly quiet; Caesar crouched down into his cloak, and no one recognised him.

He took the same northward route as his troops—he was pretending to be a courier from himself to Transalpine Gaul—and then presently told the driver to make a wide circle, and strike the Via Aemilia some miles south of Ravenna. In giving these instructions, caring most to be clear he forgot to act his part, and he read in the man's face that his look and voice had been those of Caesar. It is of no importance now, thought Caesar; he dismissed the matter from his mind and looked about him. It was a clear cool night, of a kind Caesar particularly loved and had longed for often in these long years of his absence from Italy; in the sky, which was of a dark rich even blue, shone large bright calm stars; behind a graceful scarf of pearly clouds a half-moon gleamed serenely. A little breeze stirred the dust and roused the surf in the pine-trees. Far across the plain, to the right, rose the long serrated ridge of the Apennines, clear black against the darkening blue of the sky. In Rome such nights, with the quiet temples white against the dark pines on the Palatine—O, Rome, Rome! What am I about to do to you, Rome?

thought Caesar, and his mind flew over the steps, imperceptible at the time but so irrevocable, by which he had somehow turned into a public enemy, and Cnaeus Pompey into a defender of the State. But it's not true, objected Caesar in exasperation; Pompey doesn't even know what "the State" means, while I have thought of little else since my youth. Pompey can't see further than his own nose. But he is my son-in-law, a competent general, a good honest fellow who means well by Rome; how has it come about that we are on the verge of—he was relieved from the necessity of thinking the words *civil war* by a violent jolt, which almost overturned the carriage. Startled from his reverie, Caesar looked quickly round, and saw nothing but pine-trees; the road was evidently execrable, and the weaker torch had gone out. "We are lost," thought Caesar quickly; and he was almost glad of the diversion from his thoughts. He called out to the driver cheerfully:

"Is this the right way?"

The man, trembling and terrified, threw himself at the proconsul's feet. "It is not, Caesar," he confessed, almost weeping with shame. "Excited by the honour of driving you, I have missed the way."

At this piece of irony Caesar laughed, and the man—an elderly fellow, bearded, with grizzled hair—looked up at him in piteous appeal. Caesar threw back his wrappings and stepped to the ground. "Luckily there are the stars to guide us," he said. "The Via Aemilia must lie to the east, between ourselves and the sea. Take every road that goes east, and we are bound to strike it."

The driver, trembling with relief, went to his beasts' heads: Caesar's escort dismounted, and by pushing and heaving, amid much display of teeth, hoofs and ears by the mules, the carriage was at length safely backed out of the wood. It was a pleasure to see the stars again and be sure of one's direction, and when a turning to the left presented itself the little procession made along it cheerfully. But the

next hours proved like some dark vision endured in sleep. The wind rose, the stars were blotted out by cloud, dust swirled across the plain in sudden stinging gusts, the remaining torch was extinguished, innumerable clumps of pines, each looking like the last, resounded mournfully, the lanes were narrow and full of holes, and no road appeared in the least resembling the Via Aemilia. "It will be an amusing story for posterity if civil war is prevented by an erring coachman," reflected Caesar, putting his shoulder to the wheel—but the thought exasperated him, and he set his will to conquer, to beat down all that lay between him and his plan. He shoved at the wheel viciously, and with a jerk it mounted the side of the hole and flew forward, somewhat incommoding the hindquarters of a mule.

"Have confidence in Caesar's fortune," said Caesar easily to the now frankly weeping driver. "We are in a plain, not in difficult mountainous country; our direction is clear, we have but to pursue it. Drive on."

The dust, the pines, the holes, the flicking ears, and the entire absence of a road, repeated themselves *ad nauseam*, and the hours passed on. Suddenly and quite unexpectedly, as they took a turn, the tread of the right-hand mule rang sharp and loud and a spark flew up from its hoof. "The Via Aemilia!" cried Caesar and the driver together, hopefully. Their hope was justified; as the carriage swung to the right the wheels thundered and the hoofs clattered reassuringly on good solid paved road. Immediately—as Caesar noted with some amusement—the driver became a competent reliable experienced driver again, and Caesar a dignified and remote general. The ears of the mules drooped contentedly, their sleek hindquarters jogged along at a steady respectable pace; the very carriage seemed to recover its calm. Caesar laughed, and began to tell his companions the story of how he was once lost with a price on his head on a very wet mountain in the days of Sulla.

"You have had a marvellous career, Caesar," they all

said admiringly. "The gods have surely preserved you for a marvellous fate."

Caesar, who was used to such remarks nowadays, had acquired a manner of accepting them in a benevolent Olympian silence without listening to them.

Presently the unmistakable tread of soldiers on the march began to sound ahead, and in a mile or two the carriage caught up the thirteenth legion. The men drew to one side to let their general pass; they had been ordered to make no demonstration, and so were dutifully silent; but as the carriage passed Caesar could see their eyeballs gleaming in the light of their torches, for they all turned on him an adoring gaze. The general's carriage rolled on amid his escort, and the legion's footsteps died away in the rear.

Suddenly the carriage pulled up with a jerk.

"What is it now?" demanded Caesar somewhat testily.

"The Rubicon, sir," said the driver in a respectful tone.

"Ah!" said Caesar.

He stepped out of his carriage and shook himself, conscious of a sudden dolorous qualm. He had been so busy overcoming the difficulties of the route and arriving here in time to carry out his plan, that he had had no time to wonder whether he should carry out the plan or no. By an ancient law of the Roman Republic—a law so well known, as he reflected, that even this old fellow of a driver knew it and pulled up here—a proconsul might not return into Italy accompanied by his soldiers under arms unless specially ordered to do so, lest he be tempted to turn those arms against the Republic. The little river now in front of him was the boundary of his province; on the north side lay Nearer Gaul, on the south, Italy. The north side is peace, the south is war, reflected Caesar; if I cross, I defy the Senate, and the gods alone know what the result will be for the Republic. But if I do not cross with my army, they will hound me down as a private person, like dogs on a tuskless boar; they will never allow me to hold the consulship, they

will drive me into ruin and exile; at the best I shall eke out a paltry existence without influence and without power, watching them muddle the State's affairs inextricably, like a kitten with a ball of wool. But if I cross, it is conspiracy and sedition, treason against the State; if I cross, it is civil war. He felt a profound disturbance which extended itself from his mind to his physical condition; it seemed as if a wolf gnawed at his vitals, and he gave a violent shudder. He stepped aside from the road a moment and stood on the rough grass; the moon had come out again, and the outline of the single arch over the stream was clear. The banks, which sloped steeply down a few paces to the river, were rather muddy, patched with sparse clumps of grass; the water flowed sluggishly and looked rather muddy too. A gust of wind came tearing over the plain, dust stung his eyes, and the bents by the river rustled drearily. Well, he had arrived here, where he said he would, in spite of being lost; just as he had brought himself to safety that night he first met Servilia. He had told her then that he meant to rule Rome, and make it a finer, freer, nobler State; that course had led him to this hour and place, a proconsul of Gaul, about to cross the Rubicon. The stupidity, the incapacity, the exasperating muddle of the Senate, the debauchery and selfishness of the rich, the ignorance and misery of the poor—when he ruled Rome he would sweep all that away; Rome should be purged of her weakness and her vice, clear and strong and free. His rule would be like a fresh wind blowing through a stale room. But, to make war on Rome? To fight one's countrymen? To rejoice when Roman citizens perished, Roman towns went up in flames? (It was bad enough when *any* towns went up in flames; Labienus was always grumbling about his excessive tender-heartedness, in Gaul.) And could he be so certain that he would win this civil war? (Labienus, for instance, pretty evidently thought he wouldn't, and meant to leave him.) He had twelve fine legions, some fame, and his own will; the Senate and Pompey

could command three, four, five times as many soldiers, given time, and ships and money and allies, all the vast resources of the most powerful State in the world. Pooh ! said Caesar to himself at this contemptuously ; what is the use of all that without someone to lead it ? He recalled himself sharply from these minor considerations to the vital point : If I do not cross, it is my ruin and the ruin of all my ambition ; if I cross, it may be glory for me and glory for Rome, but it is certainly civil war. Shall I cross ? The tread of his marching legions, coming up behind him, sounded again in his ears ; time pressed.

“ Let the die be cast ! ” cried Caesar recklessly, springing back into his carriage. “ Drive on ! ”

The hoofs of the mules clattered and the carriage rolled over the bridge.

BOOK IV

THE REPUBLIC IN DANGER

THE REPUBLIC DEFENDS ITSELF

IT WAS NIGHT, but Rome was not asleep. Torches flitted about the streets, lamps burned in the houses; figures hurried up and down the temple steps; the air was filled with the sound of weeping and the murmur of religious vows. The Porta Capena was crowded; a stream of carriages, horses, litters, slaves carrying packages, and senators in military attire constantly passed out, heading for the south. For Caesar was near, and drawing nearer; he had overrun Umbria—he had entered Picenum—no, he was marching direct on Rome across the mountains by the Flaminian Way—it was rumoured, not once but many times that night, that his cavalry had already been seen from the northern gates. At every such rumour the crowd pushed and jostled frantically. It was the people of quality, the ruling classes, who were leaving; the rest stood by and watched them in sorrowful perplexity. To leave Rome like this did not seem right to them, whatever people might say; why, in Rome's worst days, when she was taken by the Gauls or threatened by Hannibal, she had never been thus deserted. But this time, it appeared, there was nothing with which to defend her—it seemed an odd thing, with all those legions in the Republic's pay, but there it was.

As soon as the news came that Caesar had crossed the Rubicon, a meeting of the Senate had been hastily called to discuss the necessary measures, and Cato with his usual bluntness had asked Pompey to give in figures what forces he had actually at hand to defend the City. To everyone's amazement Pompey looked taken aback, coloured and

stammered, and finally got out that the levies—the new levies—the levies were coming in but slowly—there were the two legions taken from Caesar, in the south, at Capua—he had, of course, his own eight legions in Spain. The Senate gazed at him in appalled silence, and Cato at length voiced the general consternation by saying harshly: “You have deceived us, Cnaeus Pompey.” He added in a mutter that it was a pity a proconsul couldn’t attend to the State’s affairs instead of gadding about the country in wedding garlands with a woman young enough to be his daughter. Raising his voice, he went on to propose that Cnaeus Pompeius should have the supreme command of the Republic’s army; “those who have caused great evils are best able to cure them,” he concluded with a sniff. The horrified Optimates silently voted the command, and Pompey, without attempting to defend himself, in considerable shame accepted it and set to work in earnest. Somehow it had never really occurred to him before that he would have to fight Caesar at the head of the whole army of Gaul; he had expected—so far as he had clearly expected anything—protracted political manoeuvres and large desertions, and finally perhaps one battle in northern Italy, in which as the Republic’s general he would command a greatly superior force. All the other conspiracies had ended like that, and he had supposed this one would too. But matters turned out most lamentably otherwise. It was true that Labienus sent letters, promising definitely to come to the Republic’s aid, and his accession would certainly be formidable; but nobody else of any importance deserted among Caesar’s officers, and not a single cohort of the men. The Republic’s levies continued to come in with alarming slowness; there was a general grumble among the available men that the terms in Caesar’s last letter should have been accepted; the reserves came up unwillingly, and there were few volunteers. And Caesar was already only fifty miles from Rome! Pompey perceived that, speaking from the military point of view, Rome could

not be defended, and in a painful interview with the leading men of his party, said so irritably. The Optimates gazed at him from eyes blank with horror, and were silent from sheer consternation. At length Cato said in his grating tones: "We must not expose the City to the risk of siege and sack without reasonable hope of success. It is our duty to preserve Rome." The Optimates, expelling long sighs, with deflated bosoms and drooped jaws agreed that all the Republic's forces should be concentrated in the south; Pompey set out promptly southward, having first decreed that all of senatorial rank should follow him, on pain of being considered traitors to the State.

So to-night, on the threat of Caesar's coming, Rome's rulers streamed from Rome. Some took their wives and families with them: others, afraid to expose their nearest and dearest to the dangers of a campaign, left them behind in what they hoped would prove safety, for if Caesar's supporters alone were left in the City, he would have no reason to harm it. It was difficult to decide for which of these the parting held greater anguish; for the one left Rome as if for ever, while the others seemed to retain some hope of return, but were severed from those they loved. Chance meetings caused changes of plan, household effects were hastily unpacked or bundled together: each fresh rumour of Caesar's approach set a wave of Optimates hurriedly flowing towards the southern gate, like a wind playing on a pond.

In contrast to all this noise and turmoil, a small group came down the steps of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline hill with an air of dignified calm. Cato had been entrusted with the defence of Sicily, and he insisted on conducting all the religious ceremonies proper to the departure of a governor from Rome, before quitting the City. He calmly took it for granted that all his male relatives, including his son-in-law, would be duly present at these rites, and such was his force of character that although, Optimates

all, they would greatly have preferred to be miles away along the Via Appia, they were mostly in attendance on him here. His wife and one half-sister—not the mother of Brutus, to whom he had merely sent a curt verbal message of contemptuous farewell—were to travel with him, and had already set out; his daughter, however, on the wish of her husband was remaining in Rome. For this daughter of his Cato had a very considerable tenderness; he spoke more freely with her than with anyone, and he was pleased to see her now, standing very erect and still as she always did, with her sleepy little son at her knee, on the temple steps, awaiting him. The firm clear lines of her face and the fresh colour of her cheeks were dimmed by the flickering light of the torches, but Cato would have known her anywhere merely by the noble carriage of her head. She made a Roman picture with her son beside her, and Cato felt moved, both as a father and a Roman. He mistakenly imagined that his partiality for Porcia was unknown to anyone but himself, however, and gave an angry snort now to dissimulate his emotion.

“You go forth in a righteous cause, my father,” said Porcia in her clear strong voice, which though neither harsh nor grating, yet greatly resembled Cato’s. “The gods restore Rome her liberty, and defend you from all harm. Farewell. Farewell.”

“Farewell, daughter,” replied Cato gruffly.

The night was now greying towards dawn, and the rush and hurry of the Optimates’ flight began to quieten. Cato’s procession, descending from the Capitoline, met the only official still left in the City, hurrying up with an escort to the treasury, to remove the Republic’s gold. He had been charged with certain tasks by the Senate, and dared not leave until he had executed them: this was the last, and he was in a fever to be gone. The attendants’ slowness, as they broke the great seal stamped with the wolf and the inscription of Senate and Roman People, and swung back

the heavy doors, exasperated him almost to madness; "Quick! Quick!" he cried, as they began to drag forward the heavy chests.

"The proverb says: Hasten slowly," replied one of the men—a Caesarian perhaps, as the magistrate reflected uncomfortably—with a grin.

At this moment a slight commotion arose at the Treasury door.

"What's that?" asked the magistrate apprehensively, glancing over his shoulder.

He commanded his secretary to go and enquire.

The man was almost knocked over as he left the room by one of the official's lictors, who rushed in, shouting wildly:

"Caesar's advance guard is crossing the Tiber!"

With a scream of terror the consul turned and ran, leaving the Treasury door open behind him.

"Written at Capua on the 26th of January. You ask me, my Atticus, to be sure to let you know what Pompey is doing," dictated Cicero to his secretary, anxiously pacing the peristyle of his Capuan villa. "I don't think he knows himself, certainly none of us do. For what could be more discreditable, more ill-considered, than this departure from the City, or I should rather call it, this most shameful, most unprincipled flight? But (you say) Pompey will recover the Republic. When? What preparation has been made for realising that hope? Is not Picenum lost? Is not the way to the City laid open? Is not all money, public and private, as it were handed over to Caesar? In fact, there is no cause to support, no forces to support it, no rallying point to which those who wish the constitution maintained can repair. Pompey is now on the road to Apulia. After that nobody knows whether he means to make a stand anywhere or to cross the sea. For why else has the southerly Apulia been selected as a place of assembly for troops, Apulia, the most sparsely peopled district in Italy, and the most remote from the point of attack in this

war? It is evident that, in sheer desperation, the object in view is flight and the facilities of a sea-coast. We shall shortly see him, I foretell, in the port of Brundisium, collecting ships.

For me, there is nothing but terror and uncertainty everywhere! For if Pompey stays in Italy, I am afraid he cannot have a dependable army; those whom he is enlisting seem reluctant to serve and averse from fighting, and his chief hope here rests on those two legions taken from Caesar and somewhat treacherously retained, whose loyalty, I understand, Pompey dare not trust in sight of the enemy. But if Pompey quits Italy, where I am to stay or go, or what I am to do, I do not know. For that man, whose tyranny you have to dread in Rome, will, I think, act with all possible harshness. What his proceedings will be, and how they are to be put into any proper shape, without Senate and without magistrates, I cannot tell. He will not be able to keep up even a semblance of constitutional action. Labienus, by the way, a man of noble character in my opinion, joined Pompey as he was marching towards Apulia, on the 22nd. He seems to have no doubt about the weakness of Caesar's forces; I hope he may be right; at the moment all the indications are to the contrary.

You see, therefore, what a state of utter uncertainty I am in! Do therefore write something to me, some advice as to what I am to do and how I am to conduct myself. Shall I commit myself wholly to the Republican cause? I am not deterred by the danger, but I am bursting with vexation at the way affairs have been carried on. Such a want of all plan! So utterly opposed in every respect to my advice! But shall I commit myself wholly to the loyalists? Or am I to procrastinate and trim, and join the winning side? . . ."

He paused and sighed, his large benevolent face peevish with hesitation.

The long plain stretched before them interminably; they marched and marched and marched, and when they halted for supper, found exactly the same scenery about them as there had been at break of day. The Adriatic still lay, very flat and quiet

beneath the wintry sunshine, in pale blue streaks, a mile or two to their left; the Apennines still made a long dark blue line, parallel to the sea, far away on the right; in front stood a little white town; about them rose thousands and thousands of grey old olive-trees, neatly arranged in rows, springing out of rich red-brown earth. The olive-trees were greatly gnarled and twisted, writhing their thick hoary trunks about as they grew upward; their branches, in summer to be heavy with fruit, were propped up by square pillars of grey stone.

"They give me the shudders," said someone in the ranks: "More like snakes than trees."

"'The olive is the first of all trees'—that's a proverb," contended a little man who belonged to these olive-growing districts.

"Teach Minerva—what about the vine?" shouted his companions.

"The vine isn't a tree," objected the little southerner.

"What is it, then?" said the others peevishly.

The argument grew so hot that the centurion had to intervene to pacify them.

It had passed an hour or two, anyway, and the soldiers looked about them again hopefully. But the landscape was just the same—the pale blue Adriatic, the little white town (it had a different name now but looked just the same), the dark blue Apennines, and those confounded olives. It grew dusk, and they thought with relief of a night's rest, for they had done a day and a half's march that day, and were tired and footsore. But no! They were given a short halt, just time to eat in the ranks, and then marched on again, along the same old road, between the same old olives—they looked snakier than ever in the failing light.

"I never knew Italy was so long," one grumbled mildly.

"A soldier's life is mostly walking," said another: "I haven't struck a blow since I entered Italy."

"Well, be thankful," an older man told him sharply:

"If the towns have all surrendered to us without fighting, that's Caesar's skill."

"Aye—but he's pushing us too hard now," complained another, fretfully. "That's right! He is!" came a hearty chorus.

"He wants to catch Pompey in Brundisium, you fools," the veteran told them.

"What will he do when he's caught him?" enquired someone doubtfully: "Will he fight, or talk Pompey over?"

"He'll offer him an olive branch," suggested the little southerner with a sly look. At this they all roared with laughter, and marched on for the next few miles in a better temper, repeating the joke.

Next day the sea, the mountains, and the olives were just the same, but the white town ahead looked a little larger: about noon the rumour came down the line that it was Brundisium. The soldiers frankly didn't believe it, but after another hour or two there began to be that kind of ripple in front which always meant something was going on up there; they began to ask eagerly: "What is it?" and peer ahead, and the ranks in front turned round, smiling all over their dusty faces, and passed back word that it was Mark Antony, come to meet them. They all knew he had been sent on ahead with some horse to explore the situation at the port.

"That is Brundisium, then?" said the next rank, eagerly.

"That's Brundisium," replied the others with a nod.

"Well, we've done the distance pretty quick, *pretty* quick—Pompey won't be expecting *us* just yet, by Mercury," said the soldiers with satisfaction, hitching up their packs.

"Well? Your report?" said Caesar impatiently to Antony. He looked pale and tired, being even more weary of the olive plain than his legionaries, if that were possible. He knew well that he was driving them relentlessly, but he *must* catch Pompey, and make an end of this dissension.

Once the Republicans got away to the vast resources of the provinces, civil war would drag on for years.

"This is not going to be too easy," said Antony thoughtfully. "They've fortified themselves pretty well—stakes and pits inside the town, I'm told, and a good ditch outside the wall. They've Labienus with them now, and you know he learned his trade with a very fine master."

Caesar sighed, and leant his cheek on one hand.

"I *told* you Labienus was beginning to pull on the rope and letting himself be tampered with!" burst out Antony. "I told you a year ago. He thinks he won your victories."

"I knew that before you came to Gaul," replied Caesar drily. "What did you expect me to do to Labienus a year ago? How did you expect me to act on your information?"

"I understand you've sent his money and baggage after him," observed Antony.

"How did you know that?" said Caesar sharply.

Antony laughed. "I know you, Caesar," he said with affection.

Caesar's tired face relaxed into a smile. "He was always complaining about my unnecessary benevolence to the enemy—I thought he should experience it for once, and perhaps change his opinion of its value," he said with some amusement. "But this is waste of time," he added sharply. "Pompey has again refused my request for an interview."

"The Optimates are afraid to let him see you," grinned Antony. "Your charm of manner is too well known."

"They must be forced to come to terms, then," snapped Caesar irritably. "I will send a further request for negotiation, but I will also inspect the harbour at once. As far as I remember, it is somewhat enclosed and could easily be blockaded."

"It could," replied Antony with admiration. "And the sooner the better," he added thoughtfully: "The ships are there, and the troops are embarking as fast as they can go."

At the first streak of dawn the tired legionaries were

awakened to toil with pick and spade. Two moles were started from opposite sides of the harbour's wings, and on the land side of the town mounds were built and siege machines brought up for action against the walls. The scalp of Pompey's head positively prickled with horror when he saw the moles; a land siege he had expected, but an attempt to cut off ships from the sea by building them in was so unheard-of, so totally strange and new to him, that he could not help an almost superstitious fear creeping upon him when he considered an antagonist capable of such devices. Labienus, however, was reassuring.

"We've built moles like that before, in Gaul," he puffed out pompously. "Nothing new about them, Magnus. I'll take some men out in the harbour in ships with extra decks on them, and send flights of spears constantly across the moles, so Caesar will need armed men to defend those working. Meanwhile you keep the enemy busy on the land-side—so that they're always either digging or under arms. He won't have enough troops to get much done, that way—Caesar never has enough troops for what he undertakes. Never. It's his great fault. Too rash. Too daring."

"Your plan is good, Titus Labienus," approved Pompey. He spoke coldly, because he perceived already that he was going to have difficulty in asserting his authority over this experienced commander; besides, he found he did not like Labienus. His red-veined cheeks, the black hair growing out of nose and ears, the pompous but yet coarse manner—all these were highly distasteful to the fastidious Pompey. But it was not one of Pompey's faults to reject good military advice because it came from a person he disliked; he was too much of a soldier not to recognise a good plan when he saw one. Moreover, after the military imbecility already displayed by most of his Optimates commanders, it was a relief to find one officer who really understood tactics. The threat to his means of departure, by Caesar's moles, had roused Pompey's determination to escape from the trap he

was in, and blinded him to the possible further consequences. "Your plan is good, Titus Labienus," he repeated more warmly: "I shall adopt it."

Nine days later, therefore, when Caesar's men, warned by signals from the friendly townspeople that the defenders had left the walls, scaled them rapidly and rushed down by side streets to the harbour, only two transports remained in the quiet blue water by the quay. The moles were only five hundred paces apart, but it was five hundred too many; far out on the sparkling sea white sails danced across the Adriatic towards the coast of Epirus, bearing Pompey, Labienus, some three hundred senators with their wives and children, and about thirty thousand legionaries—the defenders of the Republic, leaving Italy.

TWO GENERALS AND TWO ARMIES

CAESAR TOSSED RESTLESSLY on his bed of skins, beneath his patched tent. The patch annoyed him—not that he had any desire for the purple fringes and silk coverings which in daytime could be seen waving in the breeze over the hill in the camp of the Pompeians, for such luxury in time of war offended his fine taste; but the patch was symbolic of his present awkward situation, when he was poorly equipped in everything he needed.

It was all his own fault, he admitted. When Pompey and his army sailed for Epirus, the obvious strategy was to follow them at once, and force a battle before they grew any stronger. But Caesar had no ships and it was winter, and rather than wait the necessary month or two for transport he had marched his men all up Italy—settling Rome and having himself made Dictator on the way—and along southern Gaul and down into Spain, and attacked the lieutenant-generals there who were ruling the province on behalf of Pompey. The conquest of Spain had been a fearful job—the country was difficult and the people all against him—and there had been some very awkward moments when it looked as though he were going to lose. Every time news of his being in difficulties reached Rome, another batch of senators hastily crossed the sea to Pompey, remembered Caesar, chuckling at their anxiety to be on the winning side—Cicero was one. But Caesar floated a few cohorts across a river on inflated skins and took the enemy by surprise and made them surrender, and marched back into Italy, subduing various other Pompeian revolts by the

way, and reached Brundisium and found a few ships waiting, and harangued his soldiers into crossing without their slaves and baggage, and crammed as many on board as the ships would hold—about half his total force—and sailed at last in pursuit of Pompey. Antony had implored him not to go, for the sea was infested with the enemy—the Pompeians had collected a very respectable fleet and put it under the command of Bibulus, Cato's son-in-law and Caesar's old colleague in the consulship. But Caesar could not bear to wait any longer; leaving Antony behind in command, he sailed, and with his usual mixture of luck and skill got safe across the Adriatic to the coast by Dyrrhachium, and sent the ships back for the other men. He was still waiting for them. What had happened to prevent their arrival—whether Bibulus had caught the ships as they went back empty, as was rumoured, or whether he had fallen in with them as they came full, or whether he was simply blockading Brundisium so that Antony could not get out of it—Caesar had no means of knowing, for he was practically surrounded by Pompeian troops on land, and had received no message by sea from Antony.

He rolled over again impatiently now as an image of Antony came before his eyes—the strong swaggering body, the sensual face, the thick curls, the brazen eyes. It was Antony's quality of *being undaunted* which had made Caesar raise him to command. The idea of ultimate defeat never entered Antony's head; things might be "not too easy"—Antony's phrase—for a while at times, but that he, Antony, wouldn't eventually get his own way was quite inconceivable to Antony. Then why, why, *why* isn't he here? thought Caesar, tossing over again and clenching his finger-joints in an agony of impatience. How much longer have I to wait? I can't do anything till he comes. How much longer is this accursed war to continue? I'm tired of fighting; I've had ten years of it and I'm tired of it; fighting is for men like Pompey and Antony, not for me. If only Antony

would come, and I could begin to do something ! Why doesn't Antony *come* ? What's happening at Brundisium ? The picture of Brundisium now tormented him ; a flat ugly tedious place, thought Caesar irritably, with a lot of confounded sandy yellow islands one had to tack in all directions to avoid—the only possible use to man of Brundisium was to ship troops, and it was failing to do that, failing damnably. What was Antony doing at Brundisium ? What was he planning ? O, if I were only there, thought Caesar, striking his fist angrily against his hip, *I'd* find a way to bring those legions ! *I'd* march them round through Italy—I'd launch them in small boats. If I were only there !

And why not go ?

He flung back his covers, and sat upright, considering.

Why not go ?

An hour later Caesar, alone, in the garb of a slave, stood on the quay of a little fishing village of Epirus, preparing to go on board a twelve-oared boat which, he had ascertained, left for Italy at dawn. The quay was wet and the air cold—a strong sea-breeze made Caesar's teeth chatter—and the expostulations of his attendants still rang in his ears, but he felt obstinate and excited ; a little guilty, but determined. The small galley, which seemed quiet and not at all likely to sail when he first walked along the quay, slippery with fish scales and lined with nets, to find it, began presently to stir ; lanterns were lighted, hoarse voices heard ; a few other early passengers came along the quay from the inn where they had spent the night together, and Caesar gladly embarked with them, and threw himself down in the bottom of the boat like an ordinary person of no consequence. The whole ship smelt strongly of decaying fish, and the talk of the other passengers had such a harsh accent that it was almost incomprehensible ; Caesar began to forget his feeling of guilt and his errand in his amusement over the adventure. It was a long time since he had taken part in any life save that of the camp. There was a great deal of head-shaking

over the direction of the wind, expressing an anxiety which Caesar did not understand. He desired to understand it, however, and listened closely; but could make out no more, without asking questions and drawing attention to himself, than that the breeze usually blew down the river, from inland, in the morning, and that to-day its direction was reversed. Why this circumstance, apparently so favourable to a voyage across the Adriatic, troubled sailors and passengers, he could not fathom.

At last it was fully dawn; the little ship grew suddenly full of noise and movement; the ropes were thrown off from the quay bollards—one of them, brown with water, dripped all over Caesar, whereupon the captain cursed him heartily; the oars struck the water smartly, the boat got under way; and the cliffs and roofs of the little port, just tipped with the early sun, began to move slowly backward. As they drew down the river it became clear that there was certainly a strong head wind, which would probably cause some discomfort when the boat reached the open sea—but it is worth a little sea-sickness to gain four legions, reflected Caesar.

It was not long, however, before he perceived the real trouble, for there appeared ahead a curious streak of tossing, turbulent waters. It was the bar, where the river met the sea. With the assistance of a land wind boats from the port could cross this meeting-place with only a reasonably short and moderate tossing; but to-day the sea wind had excited rough waves and was driving them strongly against the current of the river; the result was the most violent clash of waters Caesar had ever seen, the waves swirling and surging and leaping and tossing in a maddened confusion of thundering white and blue. The roar of the surf was so great that even at this distance the sailors could hardly hear the captain's shouts, and the spray misted Caesar's cheek. The boat entered the zone of conflict and was tossed hither and thither like a scrap of cork; the oars now flew in so deep

that the tugging men could hardly extricate them, now merely beat the air; the boat plunged and rocked, but made little progress. The captain, perceiving that the bar was really dangerous as long as this wind lasted, now cupped his mouth in his hands and shouted instructions to turn, and the oarsmen began to back on one side and pull on the other.

"No ! No !" cried Caesar, springing to the captain's side.

"What ?" bellowed the captain, scowling.

"Go forward without fear," shouted Caesar in his ear.

"Rubbish !" began the captain.

"You carry Caesar and his fortune !" shrieked Caesar, striking his breast to explain his identity.

A change, of a kind that Caesar was well used to nowadays, came over the captain's face; a look of alarm, deference, excitement, and childish pleasure. Smiling and pointing, he explained to his men what had passed; they too all smiled, showing their white teeth in their brown faces and staring at Caesar, then, spitting on their hands, seized their oars with renewed force. The captain, watching his moment, gave the word, and the oars smote the sea strongly; the boat, which had drifted a little up the river, sprang forward again and plunged into the tossing waves. There was a roar like thunder, and the boat lurched so violently, and in so many contradictory directions, that Caesar could not keep his feet, and fell a-sprawl. He jumped up again eagerly, however, and stood smiling and pointing forward by way of encouragement. The boat, forced against the terrific current, put its nose down and shipped water heavily; then in spite of the oarsmen's cracking muscles began slowly to fall off its course, and turn broadside to the waves. A huge wall of glassy blue, white-tipped, slowly rose and loomed tremendously above them; the captain, his face suddenly as white as chalk and his eyes mere holes, gazed in terrified appeal at Caesar. But Caesar impatiently

averted his eyes. "I mean to go to Brundisium," he told himself obstinately. "Don't be a fool—you'll be drowned in a moment," said his other self. "*I must get to Brundisium!*" cried Caesar in impotent fury. "I thought you were a sober, sensible Roman," jeered his other self sardonically.

By good fortune the wave which threatened broke too soon, and though the white foam ran down its slopes towards them in an angry hiss and struck their side a heavy blow, so that the spray rained on them, the boat shook itself free and rode up safely; but now another wave, huger than the last and nearer, towered above them, its blue crest slowly curling in the act to break.

"Turn!" cried Caesar.

With a sob of relief the captain waved his arms and shouted; the helmsman leant all his weight on the tiller, the oars pulled till the boat quivered. There was a moment's awful suspense while the wave crashed down and the boat seemed to wallow defenceless beneath its thundering claws; then with a frightful jerk the prow sprang round towards the land and the boat surged forward, driven on by the now favouring wave.

In a couple of moments they were quite out of danger, in calm blue water, gently ruffled; the day was warm and sunny, the green turf and grey rocks looked highly agreeable after the foaming waste.

"Pardon, Caesar, pardon," stammered the captain, trembling. "But it would not have been right to risk your noble person further."

"You did all that a man could do," said Caesar graciously.

The captain sighed with relief, and his chalky face began to mottle, as a preliminary to regaining its natural hue.

As they approached the quay, they saw that some commotion appeared to be in progress there, for it was crowded; at a nearer point, Caesar saw that the crowd consisted of his own legionaries and officers. As soon as his foot touched land, indeed, he was surrounded by his men; the whole

army had sent him a deputation, and there was a perfect uproar of reproach. They were angry with him for mistrusting their valour, as they said, so far as to expose his life in the attempt to fetch more soldiers. And what would have become of them if their general had been drowned? They shuddered and invoked the gods at the mere notion. Some of the older men reproached him particularly for trying to force the boat on when it was obviously impossible:

"Even Caesar," a front-line centurion of the tenth told him gravely: "cannot rule the winds."

"True, Crastinus, very true," admitted Caesar. "I must remember it."

He gave the men a brilliant and gracious smile, but on the plea of fatigue dismissed them as soon as possible. In truth he was angry with himself, angry that he had allowed his impatience to escape so lamentably from his control. His adventure was the kind of stupid arrogant thing Cato might have done, he told himself, or Labienus, or Pompey—an attempt, as Crastinus truly said, to rule the winds, instead of using the existing winds to the best advantage. He was ashamed of it.

"'Not so bland as he used to be, our Caius,'" he quoted with an angry sigh. "I'm *tired* of this endless stupid fighting," he thought; but at once admonished himself: "But I must not weaken now. My rule will bring order and freedom to the Republic."

He forced himself to sleep, woke up calm and affable, and at once began to arrange some sorties in search of corn, to supplement their scanty stock and give the army something to do in which to forget the boat incident.

"There is something we all wish to know from you, Cnaeus Pompeius," said Labienus in his loud pompous tone, breathing heavily down his broad nose so that the black

hairs at the end quivered: "and I have been asked to put the question to you on behalf of the rest."

The Republican leaders were holding a military council in the tent of Pompey, in their camp overlooking the plain of Pharsalia. It was late summer by the faulty calendar, June by the season of the year, and although the tent was shaded by branches of ivy and freshly sodded, the heat, so far inland, was stifling, and did not tend to soothe tempers already irritable.

"Do not hesitate to put any question you wish, Titus Labienus," said Pompey, striving to keep the weary distaste he felt out of his tone. He was extremely tired, for he had been out in the early morning drilling with the men. He had found this necessary as a disciplinary measure; for the young patricians who officered the army had grown so lax and careless, neglecting their duties for such luxuries as they could procure in the plains and hills of Thessaly, that the men too fell quite out of hand. Pompey therefore attended their drill himself and went through all the exercises, to shame officers and men into a better frame of mind. In this he was successful, but at some physical cost to himself; he was fifty-eight years old and had lived softly for the last fourteen years, and his heart laboured as he forced his heavy body through the necessary movements. He did not yield to his fatigue, but neither did his fatigue yield to practice.

"A brief exposition of the military situation will be necessary," Labienus was puffing importantly. (Pompey sighed.) "At Dyrrhachium, after the unfortunate arrival of Antony, Caesar with his usual rashness attempted to surround our larger army with a fortification. ("He *did* surround us," muttered a young officer impatiently.) "Thanks to the timely desertion of some Gauls who had known me in their own country," went on Labienus, not seeing the raised eyebrows and sneers with which his new friends greeted this reference, "we learned the weak place

in that fortification, and were enabled to inflict upon Caesar two severe defeats in two successive days. He then retreated inland, beaten; you, Cnaeus Pompeius, very properly gave the order to pursue him. But this was a month ago; yet we still pursue, marching daily where he leads us. Now here is our question: When do you intend to fight Caesar? How much longer do you intend to drag the army thus through Thessaly, letting him escape each day?"

"Before I answer your question, Titus Labienus," said Pompey irritably: "Allow me to point out that to lose a legion in a skirmish is not a severe defeat to a general accustomed to command."

"What is it, then?" said Labienus disagreeably.

"It is the loss of a legion," said Pompey. "A serious loss, necessitating a change of plan, but not a severe defeat."

"It forced Caesar to give up his siege works," contended a senator.

"I said: necessitating a change of plan," agreed Pompey as before. "But Caesar's army was not 'a beaten army' when it left Dyrrhachium."

There was an impatient movement among the council, and a man of consular rank drawled haughtily:

"Why quibble over words? We all know that Cæsar's army is in very bad shape; weakened by disease, lacking money, food, and all necessary supplies."

"And why is that?" demanded Pompey angrily. "Is it not due precisely to that policy of delay you are now condemning? His army is, as you say, decaying rapidly."

"It would be better if he had no army at all. We ought to have finished him off at Dyrrhachium, before Antony brought the other troops over from Italy," objected one of the younger men.

Pompey coloured, for this was true and he knew it.

"Antony ought never to have been allowed to cross to Dyrrhachium at all," barked Labienus.

"It was not the fault of Bibulus that he died on board ship of a fever neglected so that he might not neglect his duty," said Pompey sharply, more able, as always, to defend others than himself. "The fault lay in those who, on his death, would not submit to a single authority, and by dividing their ships let Antony through."

There was a short silence at this, for its application to the present situation was obvious.

"Nobody wishes to dispute the single authority of Cnaeus Pompey, I am sure," said an elderly senator smoothly: "for as long a period as is necessary for the good of the Republic. Some of us however enquire—and surely we have the right to enquire—how long that is to be? It seems to some of us that——"

"Cnaeus Pompey is altogether too fond of ruling!" cried Favonius, the friend of Cato, who made a point of aping Cato's rudeness and his ultra-Republican views.

"Yes—doubtless it is very agreeable to Cnaeus Pompey to have men of consular and praetorian rank at his beck and call, as though we were slaves!" agreed a younger senator hotly. "In Caesar's camp they call this army: *the Pompeians*." There was a murmur of incredulous resentment at this, and he reiterated angrily: "Yes, the Pompeians! Those Gauls who deserted to us call us so. Pompeians! Why should Pompey fight, when a victory will put an end to power so great? He prolongs the campaign, because he desires to prolong his rule."

"It's not true! In declining to fight I am consulting the good of the Republic alone!" cried Pompey, his voice shrill with anger and shame. "Caesar's army decays daily, while we daily have fresh accessions—brought from the provinces, by men devoted to the State," he added with an effort at urbanity, looking towards his father-in-law and Favonius, who had lately arrived from Asia with a considerable force. "What should we gain by fighting? A victory could give us nothing that we cannot obtain by delay, without shedding

a drop of Roman blood; a defeat, by greatly enhancing Caesar's prestige, would give him the supplies and friends he needs."

"A defeat!" exclaimed Labienus scornfully, and all the senators rustled in agreement. "A defeat! We have forty-five thousand men; he has twenty-two thousand at the most."

"Caesar's men are veterans, and accustomed to fighting side by side," said Pompey obstinately. He did not add, because he so deeply hated to think it: "And Caesar is a general of consummate skill."

"Nonsense!" said Labienus. Pompey turned on him sharply at this insolence, and Labienus saw that he had gone too far. "You must excuse an old soldier—camp manners," he mumbled.

"I too am an old soldier, Titus Labienus," replied Pompey in a tone of wounded dignity: "But in all my campaigns I have never been present at a military council before where the general's opinions were thus questioned and disregarded. I believe I am the commander-in-chief of this army, legally appointed to that position by the Senate."

"There's no more to be said—it's plain we shan't eat Italian figs this year," snapped Favonius ill-humouredly.

"If eating figs is the great desideratum," cried the goaded Pompey, completely losing his temper: "Doubtless I am not the best fitted to achieve it!"

At that moment he was so sickened of the whole arrogant, selfish, stupid bunch that he felt nothing would be more delightful than to throw up the command; his voice therefore had an edge unusual to it, and the senators fell into a genuine alarm lest he should really desert them. They knew very well that, though ten men of equal rank would at once contest the command hotly, none of them had the general influence which Pompey's reputation conferred, while there was not a man fit to replace him from the military point of view save Labienus, and to be ordered about by

Labienus was a prospect highly distasteful to all of them. Besides, what a triumph for Caesar, if the only man fit to oppose him was found to be his own lieutenant ! And could the loyalty of a man who had changed sides once be relied upon, in any case ? A chorus of soothing exclamations and flattering speeches therefore at once broke out in favour of Pompey, concluding only when Favonius, who took no part in them, observed sourly :

“ This is waste of time. Let us hear what the general has to say of future plans.”

“ I was, in fact, planning a mode of attack on Caesar which I thought could not fail of success,” said Pompey in an aggrieved tone. “ I waited merely for the arrival of this additional cavalry we have just received.” This was not quite true, for the plan had only just entered his head, and it was also somewhat at variance with his previous words, but the council let that pass, and he went on eagerly to explain. The Republican cavalry now exceeded that of Caesar in the proportion of five to one ; he proposed to out-flank Caesar completely with horse, and drive his confused legions in from the rear.

A murmur of approval rose from all the council, and the eyes of the younger men glistened eagerly.

“ It is a good plan,” approved Labienus pompously. “ And certain, I think, of success. For Caesar’s army is not that which conquered Gaul and Germany—as I was about to say before, Cnaeus Pompeius. I was present at those battles, and I know. His men are decimated by disease and fatigue ; many of them fell at Dyrrhachium ; many of them are mere recruits. Decidedly his legions are not those which conquered Gaul and Germany.”

He did not say : “ And, most important of all, *I* am not with them ”—but it was obvious that he thought it ; and Pompey, in another spasm of irritation, felt that he understood exactly why Labienus had changed sides, what Caesar thought of Labienus, and Labienus thought of Caesar. For

a moment he felt there was nothing he would like better than a few moments' really malicious discussion of Labienus with his former general. Dismissing this thought with some shame, in a tone of weary exasperation he replied:

"In spite of all that I should prefer to wait ten or twelve days longer."

But this was received with an outcry, and from all sides came the urgent demand that the battle should take place on the morrow.

"My men must have some rest," objected Pompey's father-in-law, anxiously.

"They have had several days—let us offer battle before our plans are known to Caesar," said one of the officers who had been defeated by Caesar in Spain.

"I'm surprised that *you* are so eager to offer battle to Caesar," sneered the senator with the drawl.

"I never had twice his army and three miles of plain to fight in," retorted the other with an angry flush.

"It is true his funds are running low now," sneered the other.

This was a reference to the rumour that bribes had assisted Caesar's victory in Spain, and as such was naturally bitterly resented by the officer concerned.

"If I don't let them fight Caesar soon they'll be fighting each other," thought the wretched Pompey despairingly, and he interrupted the quarrel just beginning by crying: "Fellow-soldiers!" They all turned to him, and at the sight of their hot angry faces, full of greed, treachery and hostility, he gave in: "Fellow-soldiers," he repeated, "we shall offer battle to Caesar to-morrow morning."

The angry faces cleared to gladness; there were shouts of approval; the officers turned to each other and began to talk excitedly.

"For my part I swear by the gods that I will not return to camp unless victorious!" shouted Labienus.

"We are all ready to take that oath, I am sure," said

Pompey with dignity. "I very gladly share it, Titus Labienus."

"Oaths ! Oaths !" snorted Favonius, as the rest eagerly cried out that they too pledged themselves. "Let us remember that we are fighting for the freedom of the Republic—that is enough for a Roman."

The remainder of the council did not hear him, for they had fallen to allotting the consulships among themselves for the next ten years—they had begun it as a joke, but were in reality sufficiently serious ; for them the battle was already won, Caesar's dictatorship ended, and the Senate back in Rome.

"We'll have a trial of all those of senatorial rank who stayed in Rome," drawled one with venom. "We'll each have three tablets—but instead of *I absolve*, *I condemn* and *Not proven*, we'll have one tablet for a verdict of exile, one for a fine—and one for a larger fine," he concluded, laughing.

"Well, I know several fine gardens whose owners I should like to see on the proscription list," drawled another.

At this they all joined in the laugh, but on a somewhat forced note, for this was their secret preoccupation.

"Fellow-soldiers !" said Pompey.

They continued to laugh, their eyes glistening with greed.

"Must I then shout at you ?" cried Pompey, trembling with rage. "Are we Romans here, or barbarian hucksters ?"

Somewhat abashed, the council as a whole gave its attention to the affair in hand, and Pompey began to outline the orders for the morrow. He perceived, however, that two or three men of the highest rank were not listening, but still continuing to talk amongst themselves ; among these, to his deep annoyance, was his father-in-law. He broke off abruptly in what he was saying, and maintained a heavy disapproving silence ; the chatterers slowly became aware of it and turned to him, but they looked hot and angry, as if their argument had by no means terminated, and made him no apologies. All the rest glanced at them in a mocking enquiry, and

a young officer who sat near them cried out scornfully:

"They were disputing who should have Caesar's priesthood!"

Before the outbreak of civil war, Pompey would never have believed that he would one day desire the presence of Cato, but he longed for that bluntreprover of ambition and corruption—whom he had left behind in command of Dyrrhachium, as the only man he could really trust—intensely, now. Even the boring eloquence of Cicero—who had stayed with Cato, conveniently indisposed—would be serviceable to remind them of their duty to the Republic.

"The Pontifex Maximus is a life appointment," he said with a kind of dreary jocularly. "It is not yet vacant."

"You mean to suggest that it may be so, to-morrow night," suggested Labienus in a good-humoured tone, apparently viewing the prospect of Caesar's death with considerable pleasure.

"Not unless I can secure your attention to the matter in hand," said Pompey bitterly.

"No battle, no new Pontifex," jested Favonius.

When the laughter had subsided, Pompey resumed his orders. From long habit, acquired in youth, he was more at ease when speaking of military matters than at any other time, and some semblance of order and enthusiasm imposed itself upon the council, so that when he presently dismissed it, he felt in a rather more hopeful mood. As his colleagues went out of the stifling tent, however, he heard the resumption of the quarrel over Caesar's priesthood, each of several men desiring it for himself and pressing his claims to it; and a high voice was drawling nasally:

"We'll each have three tablets—one for exile and two for fines."

Pompey gave a despairing exclamation and threw himself down in his chair.

"Whichever way the battle goes to-morrow," he said bitterly, "will bring suffering on Rome."

Favonius, who chanced to stand nearest to him, overheard and gave him a startled look. "Cato in a letter to me said the same," he murmured. He saluted Pompey with more respect than he had hitherto shown him, and left the tent silent and thoughtful.

Pompey with a heavy sigh called his secretary and officers on duty, and proceeded to complete the arrangements for the battle in detail, settling the harangue to the soldiers, the taking of the auspices, the watchword for the day, and so on. The effort was almost more than he could make; the irritation of the council, on top of his physical strain, had quite exhausted him. He had finished his tasks at last and lain down thankfully to get a little sleep through the heat of the day, when his secretary returned, and with apologies for disturbing him announced that Marcus Brutus had arrived from Athens, and requested an interview.

"Brutus!" exclaimed Pompey in surprise.

He coloured a little, for he was well aware that Brutus never spoke to him, never showed any awareness of his presence; on account, as Pompey supposed fretfully, of that old business of his father and the broken safe-conduct, at Mutina nearly thirty years ago. Pompey believed he had heard that Servilia had sent her son abroad during the dissensions which preceded the civil war, to be out of harm's way, and this would explain his coming from Athens—if it were really so; it seemed more likely Brutus came from Caesar, with yet another of those repeated peace proposals which Pompey found so exasperating and so insulting. (For what could any power, or indeed what could life itself, be to him if he held it only by the kindness of Caesar?) It was therefore with a sigh that he resumed his general's dress and prepared to receive his visitor.

Brutus was brought in, and the two men greeted each other stiffly. Pompey gazed at the young man, so handsome and well shaped, with such an air of nobility and such quietly

distinguished manners, rather painfully, recalling the roughness of his own untutored sons.

"Cnaeus Pompeius," began Brutus at once—and his quiet grave voice was as attractive as his person, thought Pompey wistfully: "You may know that I have hitherto always avoided your company, thinking it a pollution to have anything to do with the murderer of my father." Pompey exclaimed, but Brutus went on firmly: "But now I regard you as the general of Rome, defending the Republic against those who seek to destroy her. When the Republic is in danger private feelings must be foregone. Therefore I have come to take service in your army."

Pompey stared at him in amazement, unable to understand the motive behind this offer.

"But will not this change of allegiance," he began, "trouble your——" An instinctive delicacy restrained Pompey from saying "your mother," and he concluded instead: "your relatives?"

Brutus frowned a little. "Yes, I fear it may trouble my mother," he said quietly. "But one must act as one's principles dictate."

"The lad doesn't know the truth about his mother and Caesar," thought Pompey at once, and he felt sorry for Brutus, and kindly disposed to him.

"Perhaps," said Brutus, misinterpreting Pompey's continued silence, "I seem to make too much of the adherence of a mere private person, by coming to announce it to you thus; but I thought I ought to make clear my feelings about my father. I thought I owed it to him—and to myself," he added proudly.

"My dear Brutus," said Pompey with affection, putting his hand on the young man's shoulder: "If you knew how much pleasure your coming gives me!"

And indeed he was much moved. His many fatigues, his continual exasperating conflicts with the Optimates, and his oppressive fears for the future, had reduced his spirits

to such a pitch that to meet a man like Brutus—a man neither haughty, nor selfish, nor querulous, nor stupid, nor dishonest, but yet a man of ordinary temper and affection, not a wooden image of his ancestors like Cato—almost brought tears into Pompey's tired brown eyes. The whole business of the civil war seemed suddenly changed; it became a high duty and a noble exploit, something a man might be proud of, instead of a horrible and disastrous mistake. Calling an attendant, he gave orders about the quarters to be allotted to Brutus, then, dismissing the young man to rest after his journey, with some very complimentary expressions and a kind smile, he began to dictate some further orders which it had just occurred to him would be helpful, with renewed energy and cheerfulness.

In the general excitement due to the coming battle, the orders as to Brutus' accommodation were for some time overlooked, and he was left without a tent to retire to, in the burning heat of the day. As soon as his presence in the camp was known, acquaintances and relatives came to him from all sides, welcoming him and begging him to share their quarters till his own were ready. Brutus surveyed the camp with amazement—the ivy-wreathed tents, the arbours of green boughs, the silken curtains, the eastern carpets, the display of silver plate, disgusted his austere taste. This was not, he felt, a camp of heroes nobly devoting themselves to freedom's cause; it rather resembled a luxurious country villa on a summer holiday. He quietly declined offers of accommodation; and while the other men of his age and rank were either sleeping, or making wills and writing love-letters, or talking wildly to each other about their own prowess and how they would show it on the morrow, Brutus, drawing out a volume of Roman history from his still unpacked baggage, sat reading and taking notes.

"They're drawing out under the shelter of the hill, on the far side of the river," said Antony with disgust, shading his eyes with his hand and observing the Pompeians keenly from the door of Caesar's tent. "Just as they did yesterday. They never come out of their impregnable positions till we've gone. We can't fight them while they're on the far side of the river, can we?" he concluded in a wistful tone.

"No," said Caesar, who was reading a letter.

"Why don't they come into the plain, where we can fight them?" growled Antony.

"Because they do not want to fight," said Caesar, his eyes on the scroll.

"We can't go on much longer without fighting them," muttered Antony.

"Precisely," said Caesar. "They know that too."

"Marching away every day, making a fresh camp every night—and all on bread made of roots," said Antony in a tone of disgust: "It's hard on the men, Caesar. And what does it lead to, after all? If you march us much further we shall fall off the other side of Greece into the sea—and what then? Turn round and march back again, I suppose."

"If your daily complaint is now concluded," said Caesar mildly, rolling up the letter: "Perhaps you will go and ascertain whether the daily march has begun."

"I attended to all that before I came up here," said Antony, striving to maintain his sulky tone and failing. "They're forming up, in the daily rank."

"For my part," said Caesar, rising and coming to the door, where he stood shading his eyes at Antony's side—his appearance was at once affectionately recognised by his men—"for my part I adore root bread." He made an obscene joke on the subject, and dug Antony in the ribs with the letter which he still held. In the midst of Antony's answering guffaw both men suddenly fell silent and straightened, staring out towards the enemy.

"They seem to be crossing the river," whispered Antony excitedly.

"We must wait for the scouts' report," said Caesar. He spoke with a deliberate drawl, in order to raise no expectations, but his eyes sparkled.

They watched in silence.

"It almost appears," began Caesar cautiously.

He was interrupted by the arrival of a scout on horseback, who threw himself down in a state of convulsive excitement to report that the Pompeians were advancing into the plain in fighting order—it was a definite offer of battle. Caesar with an exclamation turned and shrilled an order into his tent; immediately the officer on duty, smiling from ear to ear, brought out the general's purple cloak and draped it on the spears before the door. This, the sign that it was a day of battle, was at once perceived by the nearest soldiers; the news was passed rapidly from lip to lip, and a scene of wild enthusiasm followed. A military council was swiftly summoned, while the men fell into their triple line; the order of battle was decided; Antony was to have the left wing, as usual; Caesar himself would fight with the tenth legion, on the right, if—as from the enemy's present movements seemed probable—Pompey commanded the opposing left. On Caesar's left was a considerable river with steep banks, so any flanking movement would necessarily take place on his right, and the scouts' reports confirmed that the enemy cavalry was all concentrating on that side. Caesar ordered a special, fourth, line to be formed of picked men and placed on the right, concealed behind his scanty cavalry, and he instructed the officers of these that they were on no account to move till he gave the word. By this time the men were drawn up, ready for the formalities which preceded battle. Caesar rapidly and somewhat perfunctorily performed the necessary religious sacrifice, and impatiently enquired of the priest what augury he deduced from the state of the victim's entrails.

"A great change in your present fortunes, Caesar," quavered the priest.

"That might be taken two opposite ways," objected Antony.

"So might all auguries," thought Caesar impatiently. He did not voice this sentiment, however, for he had observed that the most surprising people, including even the hardest ruffians, were astonishingly credulous in religious matters, and he never willingly offended the susceptibilities of any man. He proceeded to deliver to the army the customary general's harangue.

"It is not by our own will that we are engaged in these dissensions," he shouted shrilly. "After all the long and hard service we have performed for the Republic, those Pompeians wished to deprive us of our reward." (An angry murmur arose at this.) "You yourselves know how often I have offered to negotiate peace; I have never ceased to send messengers, and demand an interview with Cnaeus Pompey, since we first entered Italy last year. All my proposals have been insultingly refused." (The murmur deepened.) "The Pompeians think that because we have lived on roots, while they dine off silver in luxury, we are to be despised." (The murmur rose into an angry shout.) "They are twice our number in legions, and command five times our number of horse. Now is your opportunity to show them whether the heroes of Gaul are to be despised by these dainty dancers or no. By your valour, you may to-night enjoy all those luxuries with which they now taunt us. Your officers have communicated my orders to you, and you will carry them out with the attention and courage for which you have long been distinguished. You are not to charge until I give the signal." He gave them such a baleful glare as he said this, and spoke with such biting emphasis, that they were really impressed, and acknowledged within themselves the necessity for specially strict discipline when a job as difficult and dangerous as the present lay before them. "The word for the

day," concluded Caesar, permitting himself to smile: "is *Venus the All-Conquering*."

This, which alluded to the descent of the Julian family from the goddess, but alluded also to the triumphs of love, tickled the fancy of the legions, and they turned to their task with a cheerful roar.

As the commanders were separating for their several stations, Caesar called Antony back for a word alone.

"I have news this morning that Marcus Brutus has joined the Pompeians," he said quickly, looking over Antony's shoulder. "He must be preserved unhurt. Tell the other officers. If he attempts to escape, let him go rather than harm him."

"It is an order, Caesar," said Antony drily.

Caesar now, having donned his general's cloak, went rapidly to inspect and encourage the newly arranged fourth line.

"The losing of the battle depends on the whole army," he told them: "but the winning of the battle depends on you."

He explained what they were to do with regard to the enemy's cavalry, which was already on the move. The Pompeian horse was composed partly of Eastern allies, partly of young patricians belonging to the highest families in Rome; and the squadron was brilliant with gold and silver harness, Eastern brocade and patrician purple, high crests and waving plumes. Caesar glanced from them to his own pinched and shabby-looking men. A vicious and bitter smile contorted his lips, and he commanded stridently:

"Aim at the face."

Returning to his position with the tenth, he called out shrilly to Crastinus:

"What hope of victory, Crastinus?"

"You shall be grateful to me to-day, general, alive or dead!" cried Crastinus; and excited by Caesar's notice, he turned to the front line and shouted: "Follow me! This is

the last battle; win this, and we shall regain our freedom and our general his dignity ! ”

Caesar watched the Pompeian lines intently. Suddenly his eyes blazed, he smiled, threw up his head and gave the signal; the trumpets sounded and the battle began.

Pompey, sitting a handsome horse with military erectness on the Republican left wing, made a fine soldierly figure, well calculated to inspire confidence in his men, but beneath his purple cloak and his air of dignity he was profoundly wretched and uneasy. He felt broken with fatigue; oppressed by the hot airless night he had had little sleep, lying awake for long hours, brooding, sighing heavily, while from time to time his body suddenly twitched in consequence of his physical overstrain. Just as the sky paled towards dawn he had fallen into a heavy sleep, in which he experienced a very vivid dream. He clearly saw himself standing in his own theatre, his fine theatre he had built in Rome, dedicating a heap of spoils of battle to the goddess Venus. While he was in the very act of dedication his attendants had woken him suddenly, for it was the hour he had set, and as often happens when a sleeper is startled out of a dream before its ending, Pompey could not shake himself free of its obsession. At first he had thought with relief: it is a good dream, an omen of victory; and he told it to his officers, cheerfully. But then he had begun to worry about the dream. Why to Venus? thought Pompey, perplexed; Venus is Caesar's ancestor, not mine. Can it be that I and all my friends are to be Caesar's trophies? He tried to shake off the preoccupation, but he was deadly tired; his head ached, his mouth tasted badly, his mind felt confused, his body cumbersome. He attended, however, to his military duties carefully, and felt some return of ease and happiness as the huge army marched out and deployed itself on the plain, exactly in accordance with his dispositions. After all, thought Pompey, soothed, in spite

of his fourteen years of civil life, he still knew how to command an army. The cavalry squadrons began to prepare their encircling movement, quite correctly; all seemed well.

"After all," thought Pompey again now, almost cheerfully: "with an army twice the size of his, and five or six times as many horse, we ought to be able to do something."

Unfortunately when he turned back to survey his legions, he received a shock of disgusted alarm, for the infantry line wavered back and forth in a most disorderly fashion; at different points the men, led by their young inexperienced officers, were charging forward and then, perceiving there was no general movement in support, running back again in twos or threes. They shouted and waved their weapons—Pompey had never seen such behaviour in a Roman army before; he was horrified. Caesar's line by comparison seemed so solid and quiet that Pompey had a moment's panic.

"This must be stopped at once," he said.

A young senator who had seen recent service in Asia urged him to order the legions to halt where they were and wait to receive the Caesarians' charge—"if they're starving, as it's said," he pleaded eagerly, "and have to charge the double distance, they'll be exhausted by the time they arrive." Pompey frowned; he had never heard of such tactics and therefore distrusted them. The young patrician, turning away, lifted his eyebrows and pulled down his mouth in a sneer to his friends, and the sensitive Pompey almost thought he caught the words: *fourteen years without war*. Puzzled and worried, he said unhappily: "Well, perhaps you are right," and was rewarded by seeing the young man's face clear. He sent messages flying to the ranks, for there was no time to be lost, the Caesarian onslaught was beginning. The orders were obeyed, and Pompey sighed with relief; for the legions having halted, influenced by the feeling of being on parade which this gave them, fell silent and looked more soldierly.

Unfortunately at this moment Caesar's soldiers, perceiving

that their opponents were not moving towards them, halted halfway between the lines of their own accord, and took time to recover their breath. Pompey's men surveyed them in silence, and somehow there was a feeling of disappointment, of check, in the air. Then the Caesarians re-formed and charged, shouting with all their might: *Venus the All-Conquering*! Yes—very natural—Venus is the Julian goddess, thought Pompey; but why should *I* dream I was dedicating spoils to Venus? "Why Venus?" worried Pompey, judging the moment and signing to his trumpeter; the harsh brazen sound clanged, and the spears flew through the air. A moment, then the clash and shock of battle; the Romans stood firm to receive the enemy—"but they are all Romans to-day," thought Pompey sadly. The spears were thrown and both sides took to their sword; neither yielded, and it was evident that the contest would be a bitter one; Pompey felt relief, for behind him here were the two legions he had taken from Caesar for Syria—he had put them under his own eye because he had been somewhat doubtful of their loyalty, and was glad to find them fighting their former companions so firmly.

It was not here, however, that the battle would be decided; he withdrew a little to his left, to watch the cavalry executing their flanking movement. They were doing just as they had been ordered; they had charged Caesar's cavalry and rolled it up, and were advancing round his men's exposed right side, while the archers and slingers behind were following them closely. The manœuvre appeared to be succeeding; but Pompey observed with some uneasiness that the other legions of Caesar's army seemed not at all disconcerted by what was happening on their flank; neither Caesar himself—whom he recognised from afar by his purple cloak—nor any of the cohorts visible, seemed to be in perturbed movement, nor were the trumpets clanging frequently to indicate any sudden change of plan. "And if I win the battle for them," thought Pompey wearily: "I shall only receive

insolence for my pains, and be told I'm over-fond of power." One Caesarian trumpet now gave tongue. "Why to Venus?" thought Pompey uneasily, as he waited for news, and suddenly it struck him that his own watchword—*Hercules the Unconquered*—was an ill-omened one. Unconquered ! That belonged to the past ; what of the future ? He had certainly always been unconquered—until to-day. Pompey shook his shoulders wretchedly to rid himself of these ill-omened thoughts, and sent an officer away towards the cloud of dust which concealed the cavalry, to discover what was going on there.

A few archers now came running from that direction, wounded and staggering, with a look of horror on their faces, down which poured sweat ; Pompey ordered them back peremptorily, and sent an officer to turn them ; they took a few halting steps towards the enemy, then broke and fled wildly towards the hills.

And suddenly the Pompeian cavalry came flying back in terrible disorder, and everything on this wing was a wild confusion, a frightful disaster, a hopeless rout. Many of the horses, still glittering in their costly harness, galloped madly, riderless ; the rest were ridden by torn and frantic men, lost to all consideration of what became a Roman ; the hoofs thundered, the dust flew, screams of panic tore the air ; it was useless to try to turn them, and indeed dangerous to remain in their path. The archers and slingers, shrieked a flying senator to whom Pompey shouted a question as he galloped past swaying in the saddle, were cut to bits, the Caesarians were on their very heels. "A fourth line of fresh men," he gasped : "An unexpected charge. Take care !" He waved a warning hand behind him as he fled, and Pompey, gazing through the dust, perceived the standards of the tenth, advancing. The purple-clad figure of their general showed amongst the men. Caesar—Rome—the spoils of Venus—my theatre—*Julia* ! thought Pompey. Then he forgot everything but his own agony.

About noon, the cohorts left on duty at the main gate of the Pompeian camp were astounded to see their general gallop up to them alone.

"Secure the camp!" shouted Pompey in a strange hoarse tone. "Defend it diligently if—anything—adverse—should happen. I will visit the other gates and encourage the guards."

He passed in forthwith. The men, astonished as much by his appearing there at all as by his pallor and disordered look, exchanged uneasy and alarmed glances. At first they were silent, out of respect; then gradually they exchanged a few whispered words, and communicated with the other guards at the gates and on the walls; and it became known all over the camp that Pompey, Pompey the Great, had left the battle and was sitting in his tent, alone.

The guards had little time in which to discuss this, however, for soon the noise of the battle began to roll, slowly but steadily, up the hill towards the camp; nervous and unbelieving, the men yet began to look to their arms and take their fighting stations, and sure enough, there soon burst through the gates a disorderly, struggling, screaming rabble—fugitives, their own men. They fled straight through the camp and out the other side; there was nothing to be done with them, their spirit was hopelessly lost. On their very heels came the Caesarians, mad with victory; they rushed up the hill, and without a pause to take breath, as it seemed, began to storm the wall.

The shouting and turmoil reached the ears of Pompey as he sat in his tent alone, his head in his hands, penetrating even the stupor of despair which mercifully dulled his brain.

"What, even into the very camp?" he muttered.

He rose, and with clumsy heavy fingers slowly laid aside his general's cloak.

One of the officers who had served him in Spain retained sufficient presence of mind to collect a troop of cavalry and saddle a fresh horse, but he absolutely lacked the courage to

enter the tent of the defeated general, and they were all standing without, in an agony of indecision, when Favonius, who alone of the whole senatorial band gave a thought to Pompey, came up at a gallop, wounded and panting. Taking the situation in at a glance, he threw himself to the ground and rushed in upon Pompey.

"Quick ! Quick !" cried Favonius. "There's no time to lose, Cnaeus Pompey ! There are thirty of us here to ride with you—quick ! Quick !"

Pompey stared at him stupidly. With a groan, Favonius seized him by the arm ; Pompey made no resistance, but suffered himself to be led outside and mounted. Dazed and speechless, he rode out of the camp by the rear gate ; he was barely a mile distant when the victorious Caesarians entered it. The defeat of the Republicans was complete.

"Only about two hundred of ours killed," said Antony, as he and Caesar together walked over the battlefield. "But thirty centurions. Crastinus is gone, of the tenth. You remember Crastinus ? Yes, I thought you'd be sorry. Fifteen thousand of the enemy ; and we took a hundred and eighty colour standards, and nine eagles."

Caesar, who looked pale and exhausted, with circles round his eyes, sighed heavily. The frightful heaps of Roman dead did not elate him ; especially as so many of the bodies wore the signs of senatorial rank, and belonged to men whom he had known all his life, bearing names famous in Roman history. There was old Thermus, there was Dolabella ; there were scores of friends and even relatives of his own. The flower of the Roman patricians had perished ; in the dejection which followed the terrible excitement of the battle, he could not forget that if these men had died in a foreign war, it would have been regarded as one of the greatest disasters which had ever befallen Rome.

"They would have it so!" he exclaimed bitterly, gazing at a dying man, one of his own cousins, whose glazing eyes replied with a fixed stare of hatred. "It is their doing, not mine. I, Caius Caesar, after winning them so many wars, should have been condemned if I had dismissed my army."

"What shall you do now, seeing that most of the rest have surrendered?" demanded Antony, to distract him from these painful thoughts.

"I must follow Pompey—we must have a peace—no more of these Roman battles," threw out Caesar.

He spoke disjointedly, shading his eyes with his hand and staring fixedly across the plain; then without offering any explanation walked in that direction swiftly, picking his way among the heaps of dead. His destination was the body of a young man lying face downward; he stooped and jerked it over, then stood up with a sigh of relief. It occurred to Antony that his general was, of course, looking for the son of Servilia. He had a vague remembrance of seeing Brutus fighting in the wing opposed to himself, and then, in the general rout, of someone rather like him slipping away across a marshy bed of reeds, alone. To please Caesar, it might be worth while to send a few horse off in that direction to look for the nincompoop, reflected Antony.

He did so, and accordingly in the afternoon, when Caesar had already ridden off in pursuit of Pompey, Antony's men brought to him Brutus, drenched in mud and wounded on the shoulder. The Republican's white face, though sternly set, bore such a frightful expression of anguish that Antony felt obliged to enquire:

"Is your wound severe?"

"No," said Brutus shortly.

"Well—take him to Caesar," directed Antony carelessly, annoyed by his tone.

"I should prefer to accept my fate at your hands," said Brutus, looking around him haughtily.

Antony raised his heavy eyebrows in surprise, for he was engaged upon some executions of leading men whom Caesar had already captured and forgiven twice before and would not forgive again, and the scene was certainly not a tempting one. Something in the intense pallor of Brutus, and the somewhat sheepish leers of the cavalry who had captured him, now gave Antony a hint of the reason for this unnatural preference. "The men have been twitting him about his mother and Caesar," thought Antony, and the beginnings of a ribald laugh curved his wide full lips. He saw, by the answering grin on the faces of the troopers, that it was so, and within himself enjoyed Brutus' humiliation heartily. Repressing his smile, however, he curtly observed:

"Caesar's orders are that you should be taken to him unharmed. And in this army," he added with a sneer: "we obey orders."

On the following day the escort of Brutus overtook Caesar on his way to the coast, and presented their prisoner excitedly to the officer on duty, hoping for a handsome present. The general was at dinner in the house of a magistrate of the town, but they received a reward far surpassing even their expectations, and departed in high delight, jingling their coins. Brutus was taken to a small inner court, and left alone.

"My dear boy!" exclaimed Caesar, coming swiftly from the banquet hall to greet his prisoner: "I can't tell you how delighted I am to see you safe and sound. I feared greatly for you when you were not to be found after the battle. Where have you been all this time?"

"Does that matter?" said Brutus hoarsely.

"Not now that you are found," agreed Caesar. He saw at once that the young man was in great distress—"I suppose this is his first defeat," thought Caesar with a sigh—and he spoke soothingly. "Will you dine with me here, now?" he said. "Or do you prefer to rest alone after your journey?"

"I should prefer to be put to death at once, as one who loves the Republic and is your enemy," said Brutus in a harsh cold tone. "I should have killed myself before this if I had had my sword. I do not care to live now."

"My dear lad," said Caesar with affection, "you are not yourself just now, you are not aware of what you utter. You and I have been friends all our lives; surely you will not allow a mere political difference to come between us? We have each fought with courage, as Romans should, until the matter has been decided by the success of one; there is no sense in prolonging the dissension further. I bid you welcome as you would bid me, were you the victor and I the prisoner."

"I know to what I owe my safety," said Brutus, coldly as before. Suddenly his composure broke, and he cried: "Cassius always told me it was so, but I wouldn't believe him. Fool, fool that I am!" he exclaimed, striking his breast: "Deceived in this as in all other matters." He strode up to Caesar, and cried: "Deny it if you can."

"I haven't the least wish to deny my long affection for your mother, if it is that to which you are referring," said Caesar coolly, though to himself he thought: I wish this had not happened just now, when I am tired with fighting and marching.

"Profligate!" cried Brutus, panting.

"On the contrary," said Caesar smoothly: "My feeling for your mother is like my feeling for Rome—no light intrigue, but a long steady love."

"It is true, you do to the Republic what you did to her," panted Brutus.

"And is that my fault?" said Caesar in a low tone of biting emphasis. "Would I not prefer to rule Rome according to the constitution, with the approval of all good men? Would I not prefer that your mother were my wife, and you my son? If I could arrange my fortune as I would, do you think I would choose to fight Romans, and have no son? One works in the conditions life offers, one can do no other."

"It is to make one's principles wait upon opportunity," objected Brutus, but his tone wavered.

"Every other view of life is childish and ill-founded," said Caesar firmly. "If you have any true love for Rome, Marcus Brutus, as it is said your ancestor had, who sacrificed his own sons to the welfare of the Republic, you should, as he did, lay aside your feelings and do what you can to secure peace for Rome. I have conquered, and I shall rule in Rome; make it your part to aid that rule in bringing good to the Republic."

Brutus put his hand to his head in a dazed fashion.

"You are tired," said Caesar quickly, "and wounded. You need sleep. I too have many cares awaiting me. We must part now—to meet again soon and often, I hope. There are very few to whom I can speak openly and sincerely as I do to you and to your mother, Brutus."

He laid a hand on the young man's shoulder in affectionate farewell, and Brutus, standing with hanging head, did not remove it.

But as Caesar returned to his interrupted banquet, having given orders for his prisoner to be guarded and tended, he reflected, puzzled:

"'One works on the terms life offers.' Why did I say that? I used not to think so—I did not think so the day I first met the lad."

And a sudden frightful longing seized him to be that young Caesar again who had met Servilia in the mountains with her baby at her breast; no Bithynian dishonour, no bribery, no conspiracies, no civil war, yet in existence.

He sighed, then entered the banquet hall, smiling brilliantly.

Overhead the yards creaked and the sails gently flapped in a momentary lull of the wind; then there was a dull crack as the sails filled, and the steady ripple of the ship cleaving

the water began again on the other side of the timber, a handsbreadth from Pompey's ear.

Pompey lay awake listening to these sea-going sounds and watching the slow arc of the lamp which swung by chains from the beams of the hold. He suffered such intense mental agony that he wondered why he lived, and his hand stole out towards his sword, which lay on the mattress beside him. But no, no; to kill himself now would be mere pusillanimity; he should have died at Pharsalia, to die with valour intact. Pharsalia! Ah! A low groan escaped from his lips.

"Cnaeus, why do you torment yourself thus?" said Cornelia pityingly at his side. "The army is lost; well, you must raise another."

Alas, thought Pompey, so much more was lost to him than a mere army; his pride, his reputation, his ability to face all men and say he did his best, his very courage. He, Pompey, Pompey the Great, Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus, the Conqueror of the East, had actually run from a battle before it was over, deserted his command, sat in a tent with his head in his hands while men in his army fought and died for him. It was unthinkable, it was incredible, it could not have happened. How had he lost the battle, how had he managed to lose it, when he had twice the number of Caesar's men?

"It was the cavalry," he murmured fretfully. "The Gaulish horse—they must have betrayed me. I was betrayed."

"Yes, yes," Cornelia soothed him.

Her voice was mild, and Pompey turned suddenly to seek relief from his despairing anguish in her arms. Cornelia with a faint sigh took his head on her breast and spoke comfort to him. She had behaved in every way as a wife should behave; her notions of duty forbade her to reproach, to whine; it was true that when Pompey, calling for her and his second son in the island where he had left them, in a Greek friend's care,

for safety, had broken to her the frightful news of the disaster, she had fainted; but her first words on recovering blamed herself as bringing ill-fortune, since twice her husbands had been concerned in a defeat of Rome. In reassuring her, Pompey for a moment forgot, as she had meant he should, his grief. Since then, save for one convulsive shrinking when she asked her husband of her father's safety and heard that he knew nothing of it, she had treated the defeated general with the most admirable deference and tact, soothing, encouraging, glossing over the awkward questions of her stepson Sextus and the still more awkward narrative of Favonius. Yes, she was a good Roman wife, reflected Pompey, and he was grateful; but her hands were cold, cold, cold, and her words had no love in them, only pity and affection. She doesn't love me, mourned Pompey, and why should she? Her heart is with the ashes of that young Crassus, the father of her child. Only Flora loved me, thought Pompey, going back into the days of his glowing youth, when life was as golden as Flora's golden curls. Only Flora loved me—and Julia. Pompey tossed in pain, remembering Julia's blue eyes, her sweet voice, her loving hands, the absurd pet names she had for him, the naughty jokes she used to whisper in his ear. If this were Julia who lay beside me, I could tell her the truth about Pharsalia, he thought: the maddening insults of the Optimates which drove me to fight, the arrogant stupidity of the officers, the bad discipline of the men, my own sudden mad flight. Julia would listen, and laugh sweetly, and imitate Cato and Labienus, and none of it would matter, and on the morrow I should begin to raise a fresh army with a good heart. If my fortune had been what I desired it, reflected Pompey, I should have been a friend of Caesar and the father of his grandchild, living in honourable amity with all our colleagues in the Senate, honourably serving the Roman State. But I hate Caesar, and Julia is dead, and Rome is dying, and there is no one in the earth to whom I can tell the truth about Pharsalia—even

my poor Demetrius is dead. It is time for me to die too, reflected Pompey; but I can't die now, I should be ashamed to die now; I must brave it out now and do my best for the Republic; I should have died at Pharsalia. Pharsalia! A groan of anguish burst again from Pompey's lips; his thoughts had swung through the same wretched course and brought him back again to the reason for his misery, as regularly as the lamp there swung back and forth in the slow rolling of the ship. Pompey was ashamed of these recurrent displays of emotion before his young wife; he caught himself up, bit his lip and prepared to make light of it to Cornelia this time. But she did not speak. He waited for a moment in surprise, and heard nothing but her light steady breathing—she was asleep. Asleep! Asleep!

Pompey's spirit broke. He threw himself aside, and lay inert, silent, scarcely feeling, in the complete abandonment of utter resignation.

Falling into a heavy sleep just on dawn, he was wakened abruptly by the captain and Favonius. "Now I am defeated they might at least let me sleep," thought Pompey; but he made an effort, roused himself to receive them with dignity, and heard their bad news with calm. The great port of Antioch, for which they were making, had heard the result of the battle of Pharsalia, and sent messages respectfully regretting that they could not allow Pompey to land. Since Asia was, after Spain, Pompey's special sphere of influence, this was very serious news indeed; and a consultation of all Pompey's party, to which several senators had attached themselves in their flight, was at once held. Favonius was loud in affirming that Pompey's proper course was at once to sail round Greece and join Cato at Dyrrhachium. Pompey, however, did not intend to face Cato until he had raised another army to replace the one he had lost—indeed, he did not dare, he had not the courage. (Besides, Labienus had gone to Cato.) Others of the party pressed home the truth that Antioch was not the only port in Asia; there were other

ports which would surely receive them, and Asia abounded in subject kings and allies, who in the past had feared Pompey's might and received benefits at his hands. Pompey glanced round at his counsellors heavily, uncertain what to do and really incapable of making a decision. On Cornelia's face there lay a look of deep distaste and dread. "It is natural she should hate Syria," thought Pompey, remembering Publius Crassus, and at once he felt he could not bear to take her there.

"Asia," he said, stumbling over his words: "Asia—I hardly dare venture my wife, I think, in the courts of those barbaric kings."

"That's nonsense, father," objected Sextus in his rough tones, looking contemptuously at Cornelia, whom he did not like.

Pompey gave him a glance of sorrowful reproof. "We shall not go to Asia," he stated more firmly.

"Spain and Italy, Gaul and Greece, are Caesar's, and you reject Asia—there is only Egypt left," muttered Favonius.

"I was about to propose that Cnaeus Pompeius should try his fortune in Egypt," suggested his Greek friend, Theophanes, to whom cultured Egypt seemed infinitely preferable to barbaric Asia. "It is only three days' sail, and there are Roman troops in Alexandria. Moreover, if we secure Egypt we can seriously embarrass Rome's corn supply."

"We will go to Egypt," said Pompey with relief.

Accordingly the three or four ships bearing the Pharsalian fugitives sailed south-west, with favouring winds, over a calm blue sea. Their disaster was so great that for the moment petty personal grievances were forgotten, and they remembered that they were Romans and must keep a brave front to the world; they regarded Pompey, who bore himself, in his numb despair, with a quiet dignity which was unassailable because it hoped for nothing, almost with awe, and felt for him a respect, and a personal attachment, which might

have won Pharsalia if it had occurred a little earlier. Pompey felt the irony of this, but he did not care; he cared for nothing, there was nothing left for which to care; only he meant to do his duty as it offered. For three days, then, there were no recriminations, no intrigues for place, on board the little fleet as it sailed on through the sunshine, meeting everywhere the news of Pharsalia but not falling in with Caesar, who could not know their destination before they knew it themselves; the sun shone, the sky and sea were deeply, richly blue, the favouring wind blew softly; Cornelia played her lute; Theophanes read aloud Greek dramas; they listened, and drew a mournful happiness from those old stories of dooms even more tragic than their own. On the third day they approached the flat sandy shore of Egypt.

Hearing that the young king Ptolemy was at Pelusium, Egypt's most important eastern fortress, they sailed thither, and sent him messages; but not venturing to risk the person of Pompey in a court which might be hostile, they anchored off the harbour to wait for the reply. This angered the haughty spirit of Sextus, and he broke into loud protests against the indignity of Romans waiting thus on the pleasure of a trumpery yellow tyrant with frizzled hair. What he said was so much in accord with Roman notions that the surviving Republicans, who had all gathered on Pompey's ship, writhed under the young man's railings; they had felt as though honourably deceased, and crossing the Styx, and now Sextus stung them back into life again, and they found its savage realities almost insupportable. Pompey himself suddenly realised the importance of the coming interview, and his own incapacity for conducting it; in a fluster he turned to Theophanes and begged his help in preparing the statement he should make to Ptolemy. Theophanes and Pompey, with Favonius, thereupon retired below and rapidly drew up, in Greek, a formal speech of greeting and request for aid on behalf of the Republic.

When they returned on deck, they found all the party

engaged in excited speculation, crowded to the side and gazing eagerly towards the shore. The harbour of Pelusium was now alive with soldiers; they thronged the quays and were embarking on two large ships of war. It was impossible to tell whether this was a hostile demonstration or a ceremonial reception; it might be either, and opinion, amongst Pompey's little band, differed hotly on the point. Pompey himself felt deeply depressed by the prospect of opening tedious and difficult negotiations, with the object of extracting men and money from an unwilling potentate accustomed to despotic power and unlimited flattery; he longed with all his heart for the peace of his country villa outside Rome. Rome! Well—he must see Ptolemy, he supposed.

An Egyptian boat now approached, with the request that Pompey, with one or two personal attendants only, would enter it. The Pompeians all fell silent, and looked at the little vessel doubtfully. To send a mere fishing-boat of this kind, with one Roman centurion and an Egyptian officer of similar rank, to receive the great Pompey, was an insult both to him and to the Roman people; the Roman centurion was perhaps a guarantee of good faith and protection, but still it was strange. The sailors in charge of the boat, through the centurion, hastily explained that the water there was shallow, and Pompey's ship had too great a draught to venture further—it would certainly ground, if it attempted to come nearer the shore. There was a pause of distrust and question; then Pompey, who had dressed in the toga and purple-striped tunic and laced leather shoes of a Roman senator, slightly shrugged his shoulders, commanded a slave and one of his freedmen to go before him, and, holding in his hand the tablets on which were written his speech for Ptolemy, climbed heavily down into the boat. For a moment, while the sailors cast off the ropes and adjusted their oars, the Romans gazed down at their general in silence; they were so perplexed and distressed that they could find nothing to say.

"Cnaeus!" murmured Cornelia at length, faintly.

Pompey, who was now seated in the stern, with his lame leg stretched stiffly before him, glanced up at her, and, smiling, but with a look of sadness in his kind brown eyes, quoted in Greek some lines of Sophocles they had read the previous evening.

"'He who enters a tyrant's door Becomes a slave though free before,'" he said.

"It is terribly true," breathed Cornelia in a mournful tone. "Don't go, Cnaeus!" she cried suddenly: "Let us turn, and go to Cato."

But at this name Pompey dropped his eyes, and the sailors at that moment getting their oars into the sea, he was carried away from the Romans without further speech.

They watched him in silence, in an agony of mingled hope and fear. It might be that when he reached the shore music would sound and flags fly in his honour; if so, that night they would banquet as the guests of the Egyptian king, and a few days hence sail for Italy with an army, their hopes renewed. It might be otherwise. They watched intently, eager for the moment of landing, and yet dreading the decision it must bring. The boat passed out of the clear green water and entered the muddier stretch near the quay. Suddenly a scream from Cornelia broke on the sunny air.

"They are killing him!" she shrieked. "Cnaeus! Cnaeus!"

It was true; the centurion and the Egyptian had drawn their swords, and were plunging them into Pompey's body; the blood spurted from his neck and side. The Romans watched in stupefaction, unable to lift a finger to save their general from being murdered before their eyes. It could be seen that in this supreme hour Pompey acted as became him; resistance was useless, so he neither struggled nor cried out, but drawing his toga across his face, received their blows with dignity, standing erect till death laid him at their feet.

The horrified Romans hoisted sail and fled.

"That he should die alone like that!" wept the frantic Cornelia. "That Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus should die in a fishing boat, alone!"

"That he should die by the hand of a Roman is my concern," said Sextus harshly. "Caesar shall pay for this."

DEATH OF A REPUBLICAN

CATO PACED slowly up and down before the steps of the temple of Jupiter in Utica, reading his accounts. The men who were passing into the temple, between the palms and the copies of famous statues, glanced at him with agitated but respectful interest; they were assembling on his summons, to discuss the disturbing circumstances confronting them.

The situation was one which in the last two years had become nauseatingly familiar all over the Roman world: Caesar, having forced a battle upon the Republican forces, had won it and was now advancing on their headquarters town. After Pharsalia the remains of the Republican party—with the exception of such faint hearts as Marcus Cicero, who promptly gave up the contest and returned to Italy—had gathered themselves into Roman Africa, under the leadership of Pompey's father-in-law and Cato. For some time, while Caesar was delayed with other wars, with a mutiny, with affairs in Rome, they had maintained themselves in the province successfully, and even made headway when Caesar himself arrived, for with his customary rashness he plunged into Africa very scantily furnished with troops. But the movement had ended, as all such movements seemed to end, in a lost battle; the news of the defeat had been received an hour ago, and it was now the duty of Cato, who had been left in charge of Utica, to decide what the town should do. Utica was a well fortified port, protected inland by a range of steepish hills; the fugitives from the battle would doubtless fall back into it for safety, and a considerable resistance to Caesar was possible, if the inhabitants desired.

Cato, sternly adhering to the old Republican institutions of Rome, had established a kind of Senate in Utica, formed partly of Romans of true senatorial rank, in flight after Pharsalia, mainly of three hundred Roman merchants resident in the town; it was this body which was now assembling in the temple behind him, to decide Utica's policy towards the victorious Caesar. Cato, having memorised the figures of troops, corn, money and ships at his disposal, put away his tablets, entered the temple and began to address the improvised Senate.

It was not without a deep sadness that he regarded the little provincial assembly, remembering the true Senate which ought now to be deliberating in peace and power in Rome; but he did not allow this to appear, and spoke in his usual harsh grating tones. He begged them not on any account to separate, not to pursue a divided policy and seek safety as single persons, for that would be fatal; let them keep together, for if they fought against Caesar they would thus be stronger, and if they decided to submit, Caesar would be for that very reason more inclined to pardon them. Let them, then, decide which course they meant to pursue, and all adhere to it firmly; for his part, if they chose resistance, he would lead them and share their perils to the end, but if they submitted, he should not reproach them. Let them consider, however, that Spain was again in revolt against Caesar, led by young Sextus, Pompey's son; that the City of Rome had never loved Dictators, and was restless under this one, that some of Caesar's best soldiers had mutinied, worn out by length of service, so that he was almost prevented from sailing for Africa at all; much, therefore, was favourable to their cause, if they themselves were not lacking to it.

"Rome by her own greatness has often raised herself from disasters worse than these," concluded Cato strongly.

His staunch courage, his unswerving loyalty to the cause he believed just, his utter honesty, his blunt candour, could

not but call forth some of the same qualities in the men he addressed, and accordingly they cried out tumultuously their excited approval; they would defend Utica, defy Caesar, close the gates, man the walls, form a garrison of liberated slaves. A decree was proposed for the latter purpose.

"It is not lawful to take property from its owners," objected Cato firmly to this. "We cannot decree any such matter. If any of their masters will voluntarily free slaves, such as are fit for service may be armed in our defence. I will gladly," he added, looking shrewdly round: "take the names of any who wish to make this gift in the service of the Republic."

All the fugitive Roman senators gave in their names, together with a few provincials, and Cato, having dismissed the assembly, withdrew to put defence measures into progress. He felt somewhat uneasy, however, about the temper of the town, distrusting the exaggerated eagerness just displayed; and his uneasiness was justified, for hardly had he left them than the Utican Roman merchants, much of whose property consisted of slaves, repented of their enthusiasm, and began, from a mixture of motives, to regret that they had not voted for submission to Caesar. How could little Utica, they asked each other—first in uneasy whispers, then more boldly, till presently the whole town hummed—how could little Utica stand against a man who commanded the whole power of Rome? From whom Cato and Pompey the Great fled out of Italy? Were they to release their slaves against Caesar, when they themselves had only such freedom as he chose to allow? This muddled argument had such a specious air of logic that it was constantly repeated, and began to sound more and more convincing; why should they release their slaves when they themselves were likely to become Caesar's slaves? Far better to submit willingly in good time, to make terms with him while they could. From this they naturally fell to considering how they might best buy their safety, and from this it was but a step to the

reflection that the fugitive Roman senators in the town—all men of importance, bearing famous Roman names—might well be handed over to Caesar, prisoners, as a proof of Utica's loyalty.

Cato, from the growing noise and confusion in the little white sun-baked town perceiving whither affairs tended, was greatly relieved at this point to hear that a considerable body of horse, in flight from the battle, was approaching Utica; taking some of the Roman senators with him, he went out to meet them. The cavalry, however, exhausted and demoralised, already trampling down the springing corn in an undisciplined manner which Cato strongly deprecated, were not at all inclined to trust themselves to Utica, which they said was an African town nowadays, not a Roman; moreover they preferred to put more miles between themselves and Caesar. Cato told them sternly that it was not a question of inclination but of duty; he would not, he said, detain them till Caesar's actual arrival, but he must insist that they remain near Utica long enough to cover the retreat of the imperilled Roman senators. Somewhat sulkily, they agreed to do so—but insisted that before they entered the town, he should drive out all the purely native Uticans. Cato replied that on such a question the three hundred must be consulted; and he retired to the town with this thoroughly constitutional aim.

By this time the whole of Utica was in an uproar; the three hundred, hastily re-assembled, told Cato flatly that they meant to submit to Caesar, and not a few ventured to mutter something about handing over the Roman senators. Cato, who had the excuse of a slight deafness, affected not to hear this, and was beginning to soothe their excited feelings by agreeing to the surrender of the town, when a message was brought to him that the Roman horse were riding away. He rushed from the temple, mounted, and galloped after them alone, his heavy face crimson from heat and the sense of urgency and crisis; as soon as he came within sight of them

on the dusty road, he waved his arms and shouted to them to wait. Somewhat to his surprise, they stopped at once and appeared to wait gladly; but when he reached them and began to gasp his orders that they should return, he found they had mistaken each other's intentions, for the horse had imagined he meant to escape with them, and were delighted to carry him with them to safety. Cato was so indignant at this notion that he could not speak; he climbed from his saddle, and, dusty and panting, his yellow eyes very fierce, he seized the bridles of the two horses nearest to him and forced their heads round towards Utica. The men, ashamed, agreed to come in and garrison the town till nightfall, to secure a safe retreat for the senators.

All through the day the panic rose, the disorder increased, and Cato was kept running from one party to the other, protecting each in turn. At one moment the senators were threatened by the three hundred, the next, the three hundred were in danger from the horse; Cato alone perceived clearly that the only safety lay in common action, the rest had disintegrated too far under the pressure of defeat and corruption to think of any safety but their own. When at liberty for a moment from these arduous and depressing activities, Cato busied himself with securing the senators' escape; he assigned them all amongst the various ships available, lent them money for the passage, and by the sheer force of his personality retained the ships in port till the fugitives were on board. The three hundred continued in session, to draw up terms of submission to Caesar, but in the general panic they had so completely lost their heads that they were incapable of composing a rational document and were obliged to seek Cato's help in this too. He had established his headquarters in a portico of the temple of Jupiter, and so was close at hand. The first item on the tablets which the chosen delegate offered him with a trembling hand was Cato's own safety, for which the three hundred demanded guarantees from Caesar.

"What!" roared Cato, purpling. The trembling delegate backed away in alarm, whereupon Cato, making a strong effort, recovered his manners so far as to thank the three hundred for their good intentions. "But you are not to ask for anything for me from Caesar," he ordered plainly. "Those who are conquered, entreat, and those who have done wrong, ask pardon. I have done no wrong to Rome, and I am not defeated by Caesar in any matter of importance. I have conquered him in honesty and justice, which alone need to be considered. However," added Cato, taking pity on the delegate's bulging eyes and straining nerves: "Let us consider what may be said to this tyrant on behalf of the three hundred."

At this moment a military tribune appeared, looking tired, wounded and dusty, to say that two Republican legions had arrived in flight from the battle, and were halting outside the town. Cato's face brightened, but the tribune (who came from the legions in question) went on to deliver a crafty and somewhat insulting message, from which it was obvious that the officer commanding the two legions did not at all wish to lay down his command in favour of Cato.

"Is it any wonder that all goes ill with us," roared Cato angrily: "When our love of office survives even in the hour of ruin?"

He began curtly to explain the situation in Utica to the tribune, but before he could finish there was an uproar outside, and one of the three hundred hurried in to announce with indignation that the Roman horse were riding off, and taking with them plunder seized from the unfortunate Utican citizens. Cato again rushed out upon the cavalry troopers, and without a word snatched the gold vase and tumbled heap of silk which lay across the first man's saddle, and threw it to the ground. The rest, ashamed, furtively put down what they had plundered, and began to urge on their horses. Cato stood in their path, shading his eyes with his hand and gazing up at them.

"It is afternoon," he barked, "not sunset. The senators are by no means yet all aboard. Why are you going?"

"It is said Caesar is approaching with his whole army," said an officer, shamefaced.

"Ah!" exclaimed Cato with bitter sarcasm: "With his *whole* army! He expects to find us brave men."

He stood aside, however, and let them pass, and the messenger from the infantry legions, seeing the position of affairs, took this chance and stole away without further ado. To the great relief of the Uticans, who now dreaded above all things any idea of a clash with Caesar, both horse and infantry promptly vanished, and the town was left undefended.

A certain quiet and peace now descended upon the upper part of Utica; only down by the harbour was there still noise and turmoil—the clatter of hoofs, the roll of wheels, shouting, screaming, haggling, ropes running through blocks as sails were hoisted, the dull thud of baggage on wooden decks, shouted orders, arguments, appeals. The delegate had gone off to meet Caesar on his errand of submission and surrender; there seemed nothing more for Cato to do. Having made up his accounts to the last denarius, he came out of the temple and stood at the head of the marble steps (of which Utica was very proud), gazing towards the harbour, shading his eyes against the golden light of the setting sun. His dress was stained, his coarse hair dishevelled, his face smeared with dust and sweat.

"Doubtless such scenes as we have had here to-day," reflected Cato sadly, "have occurred in many places and on many days during the last two years. But that does not make them any more decorous, any more fitting for a Roman."

The chief magistrates of Utica now timidly approached him, and ventured to enquire what he proposed to do, himself.

Their enquiry referred to his safety, and he knew it; but with a scowl he told them he proposed to bathe and dine, and

invited them to share his table in an hour. The Uticans, not daring to question further his intention, which they already suspected, meekly replied that they would be honoured to accept, and withdrew to make the necessary preparations.

Presently, therefore, Cato, his friends and relatives, with the chief Uticans, sat down to dine. Since the Pharsalian disaster, Cato invariably sat to dinner instead of reclining, as a sign of mourning for the distress of the Republic, and certainly nothing had happened that day to make him change this custom. The feeling of frightful panic and unmitigated disaster which had agitated Utica all day was now, however, gone; Cato, freshly bathed and oiled, sat erect and calm, and talked composedly. It was impossible to feel that a disaster was irretrievable, in Cato's presence, for something, some power of resistance and ultimate conquest, still remained. In compliment to the Stoic Cato the talk turned, over the wine, to the Stoic philosophy, the tenets of which some of those present, followers of the doctrines of Plato, mildly opposed. One of the Stoic paradoxes in particular: *the good man only is free, the wicked are all slaves*, seemed peculiarly disproved, in their opinion, by the present situations of Cato and Caesar respectively, and this was mentioned.

"You do not understand of what you speak!" thundered Cato vehemently at this, a spark in his yellow eyes. "I am free to choose my course—I shall never be Caesar's slave!"

The company fell silent and looked at each other in alarm, for this seemed to confirm what they already feared, that Cato meant to take his own life before Caesar's arrival. They whispered amongst themselves, with the result that when presently Cato, having bade the company farewell rather more warmly than was his custom (which still further excited their apprehension), retired to sleep, he found that his sword had been removed and was not to be found. He shouted for a slave; a young lad was sent in, who in a trembling tone said he did not know where the sword had been laid.

"Find it!" commanded Cato, glaring at him over the top of a scroll from which he was reading.

The lad went out, but, instructed by his superiors, did not return; Cato presently shouted again, very angrily, and again demanded his sword. His friends thereupon went in to him, and begged him not to ask for the weapon. Cato, raising himself on one elbow, enquired sarcastically whether he were supposed to have lost his senses. Taken aback, they hastily reassured him.

"Then why does no one try to convince me by reasoning that what I propose is wrong?" he demanded. "Instead of removing my sword? Prove to me that it will not be base for me to seek my safety from Caesar, and I shall not need a sword." He glared at them, but no one could find anything to say. "I have as yet decided nothing," went on Cato gruffly, "but I wish to have it in my power to perform what I think fit to resolve." As they all still remained silent, he barked out a laugh, and holding up the scroll, observed sardonically: "Since you lack arguments, I seek them in your master, Plato."

There was nothing to be said, and his friends wretchedly withdrew, and sent in a young slave with the sword. Cato drew it from its sheath, felt the point, and finding it good, observed with satisfaction: "Now I am master of myself." Laying it down beside him, he ordered that one of his freedmen should be sent to the harbour, to enquire if all the fugitives had safely left. The man, returning, reported that there was still one ship at the quay; the wind, he added, was high, and the sea rough. Cato made a sound between a snort and a sigh, whose purport was similarly mingled of contempt and compassion for the fugitives, and ordered that he was to be informed the moment the last ship had put safely out to sea. He then again unrolled his book.

The watchers round his door were presently startled by a thud within, as though the book had fallen; but even as they glanced at each other in alarm they were reassured by

hearing a loud snore. This homely sound continued to satisfy them through the night, until, just before dawn, when the first birds were beginning to sing, the weary freedman returned to say that the harbour was now all quiet, the fugitives all safely departed.

"Very good," said Cato, yawning. He slightly adjusted the pillow behind his head, settled himself into it, and bade the fellow shut the doors behind him; the freedman retired gladly, thinking that his master meant to sleep out the night and live.

As soon as he was alone, Cato raised himself on his elbow and picked up his book. It was Plato's *Phaedo*, the Socratic dialogue on the nature of the soul. Cato slowly unrolled it till he reached the passage he was seeking, which occurred towards the end, near the moment of Socrates' drinking of the commanded poison.

"*Inasmuch*," read Cato, following the Greek words with his blunt forefinger: "*Inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal . . . let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who having cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him and working harm rather than good, has arrayed the soul, not in some foreign attire, but in her own proper jewels, temperance, and justice, and courage, and nobility, and truth—in these adorned she is ready to go on her journey to the world below, when her hour comes. Me already, as a tragic poet would say, the voice of fate now calls.*"

Cato gave a snort of pleasure. The slight jeer at the high-flown, in the last sentence, lending a homely salt to the splendid utterance which went before, exactly suited his rough humour. He took up his sword, gave a little preliminary cough, and struck it strongly into his side.

●

THE REPUBLIC FALLS

“WHERE IS MY GREAT-NEPHEW?” demanded Caesar irritably, looking round him as the army advanced in battle order towards the stream.

Caesar had spent three years since Pharsalia in fighting the Republican party, forcing it gradually out of every Roman province in turn. He had fought a war in Egypt in which Pompey's death had involved him, and a war in Asia, as well as the war in Africa where Cato killed himself, and quelled a mutiny of his own soldiers, and several small revolts in Italy; and now he had the last remains of the Pompeians in front of him, making their last rally, their last stand, here in Spain. They were very substantial remains, however, as Caesar reflected with annoyance; Pompey's two sons had the hardness, the ruthlessness, which their father lacked—“They have it from Mucia, she always was a hard little nut,” thought Caesar—and Labienus was an opponent to be despised by none. They all three hated him with passion; and for his part, decided Caesar, biting his lip as he surveyed their strong position on the hill beneath the town, he hated them passionately too. They had even seduced his secretary into a plot for stabbing him; the plot was discovered in time, but then, reflected Caesar with a return of his old humour, it was almost better to be murdered than train a new secretary—he missed Philemon at every hour of the day. Yes, they hated him, and they had a strong army well placed, and he felt tired and old and would be obliged to lead his men across a stream and up a slippery rocky hill;

he felt old, old ! Only last night young Octavius had smiled when Caesar was telling the story of how he had quelled a mutiny by a single word. The soldiers of his beloved tenth had declared they would go to war no more; " You are right, citizens," he had replied, and the mutiny was over; to be called *citizens* instead of *fellow-soldiers*, by Caesar—that was more than the tenth could bear. It was a neat tale, Caesar thought, and would bear telling a time or two; but Octavius had smiled, and Caesar knew that smile—in his youth he himself had smiled like that, listening to the dreary repetitive anecdotes of dull old men. And as Octavius smiled, the boy passed his hand over his sandy head—it was too plain that he reflected with pleasure on his own thick hair, by comparison with his uncle's now scanty locks. For his part, Caesar disliked the lad's hair heartily; Octavius might think it golden, but it was a tarnished gold—indeed the whole appearance of Octavius was as though some dimming, blurring hand had been passed over a rather pretty boy. However, he was a clever lad, and own sister's grandson to Caesar, so though Caesar could never love him as he loved Brutus, or even Antony, he must do his best to train the boy. " I wish I had Antony here—he'd be more use to me here than making a muddle of ruling Rome," thought Caesar, as he said aloud again:

" Where is my great-nephew? Where is Octavius? " he repeated, turning in the saddle to scan the lines. " Surely I assigned him to the tenth? "

" Caius Octavius is in his tent—he has a cold in his head, and his physician has forbidden him to fight to-day," replied one of Caesar's personal guard in a smooth tone.

" He always has a cold when there's fighting to be done," Caesar was beginning peevishly, when it struck him that this was perhaps too true to be uttered to subordinates. He sighed, and halting the army, gave it a long harangue, hoping that Labienus would be tempted by the delay to come a little nearer, down the hill.

Labienus knew his generalship too well for that, however; and presently Caesar was obliged to lead his men—who, to do them justice, as he reflected, were eager enough—across the stream and up the slope. He hesitated a moment too long before giving the signal, but luckily the trumpeters were all waiting for it with their long trumpets to their lips, so the delay was minimised.

The battle was prolonged, fierce, and very doubtful.

On both sides were men well trained in the Roman discipline and very bitter against each other, while the generals were more equal in skill than had ever been the case with Caesar before. The tenth made their usual determined charge, but were met by a resistance equally determined; the advantage of the ground lay with the Pompeians, and in numbers they slightly excelled. The lines, locked in savage conflict, swayed back and forth; the Caesarians did not gain a yard. This went on for so long a time that it became quite disheartening for their generals to watch, and Caesar began to have an uncomfortable feeling that his men looked tired. Then the Pompeians made a rush, and the tenth staggered back a few yards.

“We’re going to lose!” thought Caesar with a sudden fearful qualm.

Instantly he threw himself from his horse, rushed on foot into the front ranks and screamed reproaches at them.

“Aren’t you ashamed to deliver your general into the hands of boys?” he shouted shrilly, running between the spears in a frenzy. “Have you forgotten how to fight? After all these years are you going to deliver your general into the hands of boys?”

His face was livid and distorted, his lower jaw quivered convulsively. The men were horrified, for they had never seen him thus before; where was the bland assurance, the easy calm, of old? If Caius feels like that, they thought soberly, it must be pretty serious. They fought desperately, conscious that victory, for the first time since the old Nervii

days, was really doubtful; but all the same determined to win. Do those two Pompey lads really think they can beat our Caesar? And Labienus? The gods blast him for a traitor! Gradually the tenth advanced; yard by yard they pushed back their opponents' left wing. Caesar, drawing deep panting breaths between clenched teeth, muttered frantically: "There's a chance! There's just a chance! Fortune, don't fail me now!" The tenth pushed on another yard; and yet another; Labienus, fearing for his left flank, withdrew a legion from the right to reinforce them. Caesar gave a high laugh like the neigh of a horse, and sent a message flying to his cavalry. They charged the weakened right—and suddenly the Pompeians were all rolled up and fleeing; it was a victory as usual, after all.

Caesar, gasping and laughing, was escorted to the tent of the dead Labienus by his chief officers.

"Well, we have won! I never fought so hard before!" he cried, tittering uncontrollably. "I've always fought for victory before, this time I fought for life!"

"It is certainly a remarkable victory, uncle; allow me to offer my highest congratulations," said Octavius—who as usual had turned up when the fighting was over with an air of having been there all the time—in his smooth sweet drawl.

"Thank you, thank you!" shrilled Caesar, raising a corner of his general's cloak to wipe his white face, which streamed with sweat.

His officers were distressed by his feverish and overwrought appearance; they dreaded lest he should have a sudden attack of falling sickness, such as he had experienced in Africa last year. "Will you not rest, Caesar?" they urged respectfully. "Will you not lie down for an hour?"

"A despatch," muttered Caesar, suffering himself, however, to be led towards the bed: "a despatch must be sent to the Senate."

"There will be plenty of time for that later, Caius Julius,"

drawled Octavius in his suave snuffle. "You have won the last battle—you are master of the Roman world."

Caesar sat down, covered his face with his hands and burst into tears.

BOOK V

FREEDOM, FAREWELL!

PATRIMONY OF A REPUBLICAN

BRUTUS, who was named in Cato's will as one of his heirs, had ordered a monument to be erected to his uncle, to be paid for not from the estate, crippled as it was by proscription, but from his own funds. Cato's body lay on the shore at Utica, where the citizens had buried it with as much pomp as they could hastily contrive before the arrival of Caesar, but Brutus thought it unfitting that the family tomb should lack a record of one of the greatest of the line, and had taken some trouble to plan a memorial which should suit at once Cato's angry dislike of ostentation and his greatness. On his return from the province of Nearer Gaul, which he had been administering for Caesar, Brutus enquired about the progress of this monument from the contractor, expecting that it would have been completed during his absence; but he was met by evasive replies and vague hints of difficulties. Unable to discover by questioning what these could be, he ordered the contractor to meet him at the tomb of the Catos, and was being driven along the Via Appia now to keep the appointment.

Though the month was May—and since Caesar's reformation of the calendar the months corresponded to the seasons of the year—the morning was cold and showery; grey clouds surged round the summits of the Alban mountains; the wind made surf in the pines, bowed the tips of the cypresses, and flapped the scroll from which Brutus was reading, relentlessly. Large heavy raindrops began to splash on the parchment as a sudden heavy shower drove across the plain towards Rome. Brutus was obliged to give up his book and fall back on his

thoughts, which like the day were overcast and dreary.

In Gaul he had found it easy to reconcile himself to his ambiguous position as a convinced Republican serving Caesar, or rather, to forget it; his duties as governor were so obvious and so pressing, and so necessary for the welfare of Rome, whoever ruled, that he felt he could not be doing wrong in fulfilling them. But now he was back in Rome all his difficulties gathered about his head as those clouds were now gathering on the mountains. The very air he breathed in Rome seemed tainted. His wife—her hair curled, her nails coloured, her cheek rouged like a courtesan's—was quite unable to understand his scruples; when, pacing the room restlessly, he spoke of dreading Caesar's return from Spain, lest he should be tempted to establish absolute power, she simply stared; it was clear she regarded Caesar as a fount of honour, and Brutus as a lucky recipient of the spray. If he turned from her impatiently to his mother, he found Servilia writing a long letter—from the troubled concentration of her look, too evidently a letter addressed to Caesar. If he went out into society, as like as not he met Antony, coarse, loud, reeking with wine and dissipation, yet, as Caesar's master of the horse, in charge of Rome. On the other hand, if he sought the company of the few surviving Pompeians, he heard either vague flowing sentences of academic regret which tied the speaker to nothing—as for instance from that inveterate trimmer Cicero, who one moment wrote a panegyric on Cato, and the next a flattering letter to Caesar—or the wildest threats of fire and slaughter against all Rome, if only the gods would helpfully inflict a defeat on Caesar. By contrast to the threats of the Pompeians, Caesar's moderation and calm good sense seemed admirable—but then, Brutus did not want to admire the Dictator. So he was tossed on a sea of doubt, unable to land on either coast, for neither was wholly desirable; everything seemed confused and misty and equivocal, nothing was clear and plain. Brutus sighed, perplexed and dispirited.

The tomb of the Catos stood, not on the Via Appia itself, but on a quiet cross-lane joining that road to the Via Latina. Brutus was surprised, as the carriage took the turning, to hear shouts and confused footsteps ahead, which presently increased, almost as though some sort of scuffle were in progress. He was still more surprised, as he approached the tomb he sought, to find a knot of men gathered before it, hustling a couple of slaves who stood guarding a litter at the foot of its steps. Even as he watched a blow fell on the foremost slave's shoulder, and the litter, violently shaken, seemed likely to overturn.

"What is this?" cried Brutus angrily, springing to the ground. "Leave the litter alone! How dare you attack a peaceable citizen!"

Forgetting all his troubles on the instant, he rushed upon the men, who were not an armed band but mere passers-by, peasants with baskets of vegetables, merchants' clerks, and the like. Disconcerted by his vehemence, his look of authority and his magistrate's dress, they fell back from the litter hastily. "Be off!" shouted Brutus, waving his arm. They backed again.

"But why should people be allowed to pay honour to Cato's tomb?" objected one in country Latin.

"Aye! Caesar's worst enemy!" cried another.

"Caesar can deal with his enemies without your assistance," said Brutus hotly. "Go!"

By this time one of the townsmen in the group had recognised the liveries of Brutus' attendants, and shouted out his name. A look of respect came over their faces; they backed away still further, threw out confused apologies, and suddenly picked up their discarded bundles and fled.

"I shall not thank you, Marcus Brutus, for I am not grateful," said a voice proudly, behind him.

Brutus turned; on the steps stood a woman in mourning, her dark eyes fixed on him in a look of angry scorn. By the proud carriage of her head he knew her, though he had not seen her for some years and her dark veil shaded her face.

" Porcia ! " he exclaimed. He took a step towards her ; his cousin retreated as though he were a noxious animal.

" I heard that you were to confer here about the monument to my father," she explained in a cold, contemptuous tone. " I told the mason to stay away, and came myself instead, to request you to desist from your plan. It is highly disagreeable to me that a monument should be erected to Cato by a Caesarian."

Brutus bent his head in thought.

" I am not altogether a Caesarian," he said at length.

" You are not altogether anything," said Porcia impatiently.

" Very true," admitted Brutus. " But let me remind you that Cato did not change his will after Pharsalia—he left my name there still as one of his heirs."

Porcia averted her eyes at this, and stood tapping her foot, as if undecided. Brutus, without moving, waited for her to speak. The lane was now empty save for his own slaves and Porcia's, who had withdrawn out of earshot respectfully, so that it had a quiet and lonely air, and Brutus felt profoundly sad. Like the Via Appia, this lane was lined with tombs ; all were of marble save only this of the family of Cato. A square plain structure of native Roman stone, facing towards Rome, unadorned save with ancient inscriptions recording the achievements of long-dead Catos, the tomb seemed to Brutus of like character to his uncle, and, like him, deserted. It was a bitter commentary on Roman affairs, mused Brutus mournfully, that Cato's daughter, paying her respects at the tomb of her ancestors, should be set upon by a crowd. Doubtless, he reminded himself, they were ignorant that the occupant of the litter was a woman ; but to insult thus the name of Cato revealed a deeper and more fatal ignorance as to the true benefactors of Rome. At this point a few rain-drops spattered the stones he was regarding, and suddenly they were in the thick of one of the day's swift showers. Brutus took a step forward to hand his cousin to the litter,

but before he could speak one of Porcia's slaves came running, holding up the key to the tomb. His mistress nodded assent, and the heavy bronze doors swung open, grinding on their hinges. Brutus stepped back with a gesture of farewell, but his cousin signed him on.

"Since you are my father's heir," she said bitterly.

Brutus, with a grave inclination of the head, followed her into the tomb.

For a few moments they stood side by side, just within the entrance, watching the rain hurl itself to the earth in swift spears, and Brutus had leisure to observe his cousin. He marked the strong clear line of chin and brow, so like her father's, the fresh colour of lip and cheek, the thick dark handsome eyebrows, the wide eyes, dark, but fiery with golden lights, the strong curves of breast and arm, moulded by her damp dress. The black wool covering slipped from her head, revealing the massive braids of her smooth dark hair; she replaced the veil with a quick jerk of strong hands, impatient but full of dignity. She was tall, almost as tall as Brutus himself; her whole body was full of energy, vigorous, erect, warm. She perhaps felt his scrutiny, respectful and courteous though it was, for she turned and moved away into the interior of the tomb. Brutus followed. The air was cold, dank, musty; the light, which reached them only through the open doorway, grew dim and grey as they descended. Silently they traversed narrow passages lined with the huge crumbling sarcophagi of Catos dead and gone. On one of these, whose simple carved pattern of a single repeated curve was almost effaced by time, Porcia laid her hand as she passed; Brutus guessed that it held the remains of the most renowned of her ancestors, Cato the Censor. They returned to a more recent chamber, where stood urns of old and new design. Here Porcia paused, and silently pointed to some tools lying beside a block covered with a cloth. Brutus advanced and threw off the cloth; a partly inscribed stone was revealed, which evidently belonged to the

memorial he had ordered, for the words *Sacred to the Shades of Marcus Porcius Cato* and, lower, *Utica*, could dimly be discerned in the wan dusk. The Roman eagle and the Roman wolf had been judged appropriate ornaments by the sculptor, and their outlines were traced at the head of the stone. But the carving was incomplete, and it was clear to Brutus that his cousin had prevented its completion.

He laid the stone against the wall, but did not cover it.

"It is not fitting, Porcia," he said gravely, "that this tomb should lack a memorial of Cato of Utica."

"It is not fitting that this tomb should lack Cato of Utica !" cried Porcia in a tone of anguish. "His ashes should lie here, in the tomb of his fathers which looks towards Rome. It is bitter to me that he should lie on foreign soil."

"Many soldiers of Rome lie so," said Brutus gently.

"It is bitter to me," repeated Porcia, her proud face quivering. "Bitter. And it is one more count in my score against that profligate upstart Caesar !" she continued, her voice rising to a passion of resentment. "May he one day pay the reckoning !" Biting her lip, she turned away and moved swiftly towards the entrance of the tomb.

"Caesar," began Brutus, following her.

"Caesar kills all the best men and enslaves the rest," threw out Porcia bitterly. "You, Marcus Brutus, are enslaved."

Brutus was silent, considering whether this were true or no.

"And you stand there and can answer nothing !" cried Porcia, turning on him angrily. "You whom my father taught ! O, how I despise you !"

"And do you suppose what I do is agreeable to me ?" demanded Brutus in his quiet deep tone, gazing out at the slackening shower. "Do you imagine I accept provinces out of personal ambition ? To please myself ?"

"To please your mother, then," taunted Porcia. Brutus threw up his head sharply. Glad to have excited him even to so slight a show of anger, Porcia smiled, and went on scornfully: "Have you, then, no family on your father's side ?

Was it not your father's ancestors who drove out the kings and freed Rome ? ”

Brutus was again silent a moment, then he said gravely : “ Do you really believe that I am vile ? That I care only for myself, and not for Rome ? ”

“ No ! ” cried Porcia suddenly.

Startled by the vehemence of her tone, Brutus turned to her abruptly, and met her eyes. They exchanged a long, strange look, from which Porcia was the first to turn aside. She stepped into the open and held out her strong well-shaped hand, palm upwards, to the rain.

“ It is almost fine,” she said. “ I have some distance to go, and my men cannot carry me all the way without rest, so I will leave you. Do as you please about the monument.”

Brutus, who had already noticed the coarse texture of Porcia's mourning robe, marked sadly this further indication of poverty, that she had but two elderly slaves and a litter for a country journey. It made him feel sick and wretched, as if he had witnessed an act of deliberate cruelty, to see his young cousin, so fresh and strong and warm, thus shadowed by the pathos of defeat. As he watched her descend the steps with her firm free gait, he re-discovered in himself his strong natural dislike to be on the winning side, and wondered how he had ever managed to forget it.

“ Are you experiencing severe pecuniary hardship ? ” he asked quietly. “ It grieves me to think of you in a narrow way of life. The patrimony of your brother and yourself has, I know, been largely confiscated ; but Caesar has decreed that a certain portion of the Pompeians' estates is to be preserved to their children. If you have not secured this portion, perhaps you will allow me to approach the authorities on your behalf. I am not without influence——”

“ *The best inheritance, surpassing any patrimony, is the glory of virtue and of things nobly done,* ” interrupted Porcia impatiently.

The words were a quotation from Cicero's newly-written panegyric on Cato, and Brutus, remembering the orator's

last letter to Caesar, which had been handed round to a score of Caesar's friends in Rome, to judge if it were sufficiently obsequious, before despatch, sighed and said nothing.

"Cicero was bereaved of his dearly loved daughter early this year," continued Porcia.

Brutus, glancing at her in surprise, for her tone revealed deep feeling, saw tears glittering on her lashes.

"You knew Tullia?" he enquired.

"Slightly," replied Porcia with an indifferent air.

Brutus understood—it was the separation of father and daughter that she lamented, in Cicero's case as in her own. He sighed again; as they stood together in the damp cold wind, waiting for their slaves, he began to feel in his heart a warmer affection for Cato than his uncle had ever aroused in him while alive. Cato's awkwardness, his rudeness, his rather silly affectations of austerity, the tedium induced by the monotony of his objections to everything new, all fell away like husks from corn, and revealed, not only the worth, but the warmth, the good will, of his character. At heart Cato was truly Roman, thought Brutus, and his daughter was like him.

"Are you living in Rome now?" enquired Brutus of his cousin in his gentle courteous tones.

"Yes—but not in a fashionable quarter likely to be frequented by you, Marcus Brutus," replied Porcia sardonically. "A client of my father's has offered us shelter in his house on the Esquiline hill."

"Allow me to escort you—your slaves' livery may perhaps bring you into danger again," said Brutus.

"I prefer to go alone," said Porcia.

"Give orders, then; and I will follow at a little distance," said Brutus gravely.

The slaves had now drawn back the curtains and were waiting for their mistress to enter the litter. One offered his wrist to her, but Brutus put him aside, took Porcia's hand and helped her in.

"My estates in Tusculum demand my presence shortly," he said, bending towards her. "To-morrow, therefore, before I leave Rome, I shall give myself the honour of paying you a visit of ceremony. I hope you will forgive my abruptness in presenting myself, and not refuse to receive me."

Porcia gave him a strange, fiery glance, and murmured ironically:

"Since you are my father's heir, come then."

On a sunny day in early June Brutus passed between two small odorous shops into the entrance of a lodging-house on the Esquiline, near the slaves' burying-ground. He was admitted by Cato's client himself, who viewed his guest's senatorial dress and distinguished bearing with an awe beginning to be diminished by familiarity, and ushered down a narrow passage smelling of wine and garlic into Porcia's apartments. The day was hot, the proximity of bakers' ovens made the rooms particularly close, and Porcia still wore her heavy mourning garb, but there was no drooping in her erect figure, no fatigue in her eye; she looked, as always, spirited and energetic, and asked Brutus eagerly for public news. After a time Cato's old tutor, Sarpedon, with whom Porcia had been reading Greek before her guest's arrival—she had kept the old man, declining to sell him, in memory of her father—tottered slowly from the room, and the cousins were left alone save for Porcia's little son, who played contentedly on the floor.

"Marcus Brutus," said Porcia then, a slight smile curving her firm lips: "This is the fourth time in four days that you have visited me. Why? Can it be that you visit Cato's daughter because Cato's cause is gaining strength? Can it be that Caesar is losing ground in Spain?"

"I have not deserved that taunt from you," said Brutus, the blood rising in his sallow cheek. "Caesar has won a decisive battle in Spain—you know it. He will return to

Rome probably early this summer, certainly before September, in time for the Roman games. The Senate has conferred on him the Dictatorship for life. Every day adds to the completeness of his victory. You know all this." He paused, then added in a lower tone: "You know, too, why I visit you."

"No, I do not," said Porcia hardly. "And since my father is dead, my mother distracted with grief, and my brother away fighting for the cause, I myself must ask you: Why?"

Brutus made his habitual pause, then answered quietly: "Because I love you."

There was a silence.

"Listen, Marcus Brutus," said Porcia at length in her firm, clear tones: "As a child I loved you." Brutus started and exclaimed. "And my father," continued Porcia, "hoped that we should marry. But you had other plans—plans doubtless better suited," she said, her voice edged with scorn, "to your political ambitions. Now you come to me here and tell me that you love me. I have been a faithful wife to another man, but I am free now, and perhaps not unwilling to remember my first love." Brutus sprang up and went towards her. Porcia raised her eyes, and arrested him with a look. "If you imagine, Marcus Brutus," she continued steadily, "that I am going to play Servilia to your Caesar, and be your faithful mistress for twenty years, you have, I think, forgotten that I am daughter to Cato. Either divorce your wife, and let us marry honestly, or come to see me no more. For my part, I shall never cease to wear mourning till Rome is free. Now, which shall it be, marriage or farewell?"

"It shall be marriage," said Brutus quietly: "with all my heart."

●

“I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH”

CAESAR AWOKE SLOWLY, dragging himself with an effort up the long steep slope from night to day.

His head ached, the blood beat thickly in his ears, there was a vile taste in his mouth; his mind felt confused, his body dull and heavy. He was used to all this nowadays, however, for his nights had grown so painful of late that he really dreaded them—he had not made up his mind whether they were worse when he retired early, or when he retired late, and repeatedly veered between these two courses, observing with grim amusement the flurry produced in his household by his alternations. He slept alone, for he wished no one to see him in those dark and distressing hours when his mind wandered; his plump wife with her cow-like eyes gazed at him reproachfully and threw out modest hints on the subject, Cleopatra the Egyptian queen, his official guest at the moment, rolled her fiery orbs and threw out immodest hints; but Caesar, though he responded affably to their advances, was firm in his refusal to share his couch. Each woman suspected the other, and both Servilia; Caesar chuckled to himself now as he recalled their manœuvrings, and felt a little better. So much better, in fact, that he was able to open his eyes. This made him feel sick, however, and he lay for a few moments very still, collecting his strength for the effort of sitting up. A subdued but deep and persistent murmur echoed in his ears; it came, he knew, from the huge crowd of visitors who besieged the Regia, his residence, each morning. (So great was the throng, indeed, that long before dawn the neighbouring streets were always impassable, and

the vegetable sellers had sent in a timid, respectful and ungrammatical complaint that their supplies, coming in from the country outside Rome, could not reach the Forum in time for the morning trade. Caesar, amused, told them to use his new forum, the Forum Julium, instead, and had a few houses knocked down to make a better route for them. Citizens of higher rank were willing to wait hours to see Caesar, and good places in the long line of visitors were actually sold for a high price.) The murmur sounded louder than ever this morning; decidedly it was time for Caesar to rise, however great his reluctance to do so, however profound his disinclination for the day which lay before him. He pulled himself up into a sitting position, surveyed his familiar surroundings—the red walls painted with scenes of countries he had conquered, his sword, his general's cloak, the trophy of Gaulish spears—with weary distaste, and stretching out his hand, took up a mirror which lay on the table and examined his appearance carefully. The haggard face he saw depressed him.

“Decidedly one is not at one's best after fourteen years' incessant war,” thought Caesar grimly.

Arranging his thinning hair with one finger, he called in a shrill tone for his slaves.

Presently his barber came in to shave him. This was a merry fellow, full of the gossip of the hour, after the manner of barbers, seasoning his chatter with a salacious but lively wit. It was Caesar's habit to encourage him to talk, hearing by this means what the street-corners of Rome thought of his latest actions. The man came in now with a brisk important air, shouted “Hail, Julius Caesar !” and threw up his arm in smart salute, quite as if he were in a military review. Caesar put up a couple of fingers in reply, amused by his up-to-date mode of address. The use of the last two names together thus was a novelty in Roman society, which, however, Caesar rather liked, for it seemed to imply that no mere individual name such as Caius was large enough

for him; he was the only member of the Julian gens, it seemed to say, who mattered, the supreme Caesar. Other men called Julius Caesar might need an individual name to distinguish them from each other, he was under no such necessity.

"And what stories have you for me to-day?" he demanded affably.

The man's eyes sparkled. "You know, sir, that house-rents in this neighbourhood have gone up because you live here?" he began.

"Yes, yes," said Caesar impatiently.

"Well, yesterday a landlord near the Forum Julium put up his rent, and when the tenant asked why, replied that the house was near your statue—you know, sir, the new one in your new Forum."

"And what did the tenant say?" enquired Caesar with a smile.

"He replied: 'But a piece of marble cannot grant provinces.'"

"Credible but not creditable," murmured Caesar.

"A farmer in the Albans having said to his goat-herd: 'The planet Lyra rises to-night,' " went on the barber: "the goat-herd replied: 'Have the stars too, then, heard of Caesar's new calendar?'"

"But that's an old one in a new dress," objected Caesar, smiling nevertheless. "Cicero said that last year."

"Marcus Tullius is in the ante-room now, Caesar," put in one of his staff of business slaves, who was anxiously standing beside him with a bundle of papers for his attention.

"Cicero waits on me? And so early?" exclaimed Caesar. In spite of himself he was shocked by the idea of a man of consular rank attending another man's morning reception, even if the man visited were himself. This obsequiousness towards my person is very distasteful, he told himself, moving restlessly in his chair. "Well, continue," he commanded the barber impatiently. "Tell me something else."

"It is said the new City overseers you appointed are thinking of putting up placards in the streets to guide the new senators to the Senate," gabbled the barber.

"What !" barked Caesar, starting up. His pale face flushed with rage, and his jaw quivered ; the barber stood aghast.

The joke was certainly calculated to annoy, for Caesar, finding the Senate terribly thinned by the civil war, had filled it up by appointing whom he pleased. This proved such a handy way of rewarding services rendered that he continued it somewhat recklessly, appointing centurions, freedmen, even barbarians unfamiliar with Rome. In his view the attendance of Gauls and Spaniards in the ruling body would serve to knit the wide-flung Roman State, but the descendants of Rome's ancient patrician families did not see the matter in the same light, and resented having to rub shoulders with men who did not even know their way about Rome. They had not dared to show their resentment to Caesar, however, and this was the first he had heard of it ; he quite forgot the dislike of obsequiousness he had just formulated, and was furious. The barber, perceiving his mistake, hastily put out of his mind the remainder of the anecdote—which told how impoverished Pompeians were earning large fees from the new senators by giving them lessons in how to wear the toga—and embarked on a long story involving a flattering confusion about the month of Quintilis, to which the Senate, in honour of Caesar's birthday in that month, had just decreed the name of July. He was inventing this story as he went along, and had no notion how to end it, so he drew out the details as long as possible, and was delighted when Caesar said impatiently : " Enough ! Enough ! " and read his papers instead of talking, while the barber dressed his hair. The man placed the laurel-wreath—once the insignia of a triumph, but now by the Senate's decree Caesar's perpetual wear—carefully on Caesar's head, and did not readjust it lest he be thought to be noticing

Caesar's baldness. He retired thankfully, glad to escape from his blunder, just as a slave came forward with Caesar's purple toga—another compliment decreed him by the Senate.

Caesar began to feel himself again now he was dressed: spruce, brilliant, all-conquering. The hum in the atrium below was now so loud that he could hardly hear himself speak, but several couriers with important letters had arrived late last night, and some business at least he must do before he could satisfy his callers, for it was a public holiday, and the rest of the day would be occupied by games. As he passed from bedroom to study along the upper passage he was visible for a moment to the crowd below, which sent up a great cry of "Caesar!" and then fell respectfully still.

"Pardon me a few moments longer, good friends," said Caesar affably over the balustrade: "I am busy about Rome's affairs." He raised a hand in greeting, and moved on.

In the study he gave orders rapidly to his large staff of secretary slaves. There were letters from Gaul, from Spain where Sextus Pompeius was still a little tiresome, a complaint from one of Caesar's settlements of veterans, another from North Italy about the collection of a tax. These settled, Caesar turned to lighter affairs. An Eastern king had written to beg for the title of *friend of the Roman people*, which conferred so much prestige.

"O, let him have it—make out a decree of the Senate giving the title," commanded Caesar.

"Whose names shall we put on the decree as supporting it in the Senate?" enquired the slave.

"Put Cicero and Brutus," said Caesar after a moment's thought. "That will sound well. And that brings another matter to my mind. The elections are drawing near. You had better prepare copies of my usual letter to the voting tribes—how does it go?"

"*Caesar the Dictator to such a tribe,*" recited the slave: "*I recommend to you such a person, that by the favour of your vote they may attain to the honours for which they sue.*"

"Yes. Make a copy for every tribe, leaving the names of the candidates blank, to be filled in later," commanded Caesar. "Antony will be consul, and Brutus and Cassius praetors, but the others I have not yet decided. Also, have a list ready for me, to-morrow, of all the provinces, with their present holders. I must go now," he concluded, rising hastily, "or I shall be late at the games."

"The monthly accounts are ready, Caesar," said another slave, proffering them.

"Bring them to the Circus—I may have an opportunity there," said Caesar, moving away.

His descent into the atrium was greeted with a cry of welcome which hushed into respectful silence as the actual business of reception began. A slave called out the name of each visitor, who thereupon advanced wearing a honeyed smile and uttered a well-composed sentence of greeting and compliment, to which Caesar replied with a gracious word. It was the aim of every visitor to extend the moment of contact with Caesar as long as possible, of the announcing slave (by Caesar's private orders) to curtail it; Caesar himself, well aware of the prestige conferred by these interviews, graded them nicely to suit the policy of the hour. As the long stream flowed past this morning, even as he smiled and nodded he watched for the appearance of Cicero, and presently asked the nomenclator impatiently where he was. "He requested a private interview and has been shown into an inner room," murmured the slave. Caesar said nothing; he saw approaching in the line a man whose son, an ardent Pompeian, was still in exile; by the way this guest nervously moistened his lips and referred to his tablets, Caesar judged that an appeal for the exile's recall was imminent. The prospect irked him; to refuse was unpopular, to consent in this case perhaps dangerous. Just as it became the turn

of Trebonius to greet him, therefore, Caesar called out loudly:

"I cannot keep Marcus Cicero waiting any longer; it is not fitting."

He rose, and casting affable smiles in every direction, with a great air of Republican virtue withdrew. As he passed out of sight he dallied a moment, listening. The names of Caesar and Cicero, uttered in complimentary tones, greeted his ear; he smiled, well pleased.

Cicero rose to greet him. On either side of the old orator stood a man of senatorial rank. Caesar frowned a little as he saw them; they were brothers whose brother was, again, an ardent Pompeian still in exile.

"To what do I owe the honour of this visit, Marcus Tullius?" said Caesar smoothly. "I fear you must be very angry with me for having kept you waiting so long."

Cicero gave an embarrassed laugh; for one might as well be angry with a lion in search of prey as with the perpetual Dictator—the very notion made him shudder.

"I have come, O Caius Caesar," he began in a formal tone, "to beg your clemency towards the brother of these two illustrious men."

He gave a little preparatory cough. "Venus! He means to deliver a speech," thought Caesar, vexed. He smiled benevolently, however, and seating himself with a dignified air, remarked: "Proceed. I am ready to hear what you have to say."

"In all cases of importance, O Caius Caesar," faltered Cicero, "I am wont to be more affected, at the beginning of my speech, than either common custom or my age would seem to require."

He was, indeed, in a pitiable condition: his hands trembled, fear widened his eyes and shook his lips, sweat pearly his lofty brow. Poor old fellow, thought Caesar, and he smiled more benevolently than before.

"Moreover, the conditions under which I have to speak

affect me," stammered the orator. "I now speak within the walls of a private house, and to you alone; if I were pleading this cause in the Forum, with what ardour and cheerfulness would the concourse of the Roman people inspire me !"

Caesar's smile hardened a little. But Cicero did not perceive this; his own eloquence, as always, excited him; he repeated: *the concourse of the Roman people would inspire me* with relish—an admirable phrase!—and suddenly found himself in full flow. Elegant phrases poured from his lips, his cheek flushed happily, his large eyes beamed. Caesar however heard nothing of it all save an occasional *your well-known clemency, O Caius Caesar*; it was obvious that he would be obliged to pardon the exile, since Cicero pleaded for him—for his reputation's sake he could hardly do other—but he was annoyed at being thus bothered with a formal speech. This long-drawn-out eloquence was hopelessly old-fashioned nowadays; indeed Cicero himself seemed quite painfully out of date. But to interrupt would doubtless wound the old fellow terribly; he must just sit it out to the end. The moment Cicero reached a suitable climax Caesar sprang up and declaimed in ringing tones:

"To exercise clemency is always a pleasure to me, Marcus Tullius, but doubly so when it may be attributed to your eloquence. Let the proper guarantees be given, and the exile return."

The exile's brothers, who from the ambiguous form of this speech thought that Caesar was pardoning him on his merits, abounded in thanks, while Cicero, who naturally took the other view, went out with the face of a happy child.

Caesar gave them a moment or two to spread the news among his visitors, then entered the atrium, smiling. Trebonius, with hope excited, sprang forward and began to babble of his son, but Caesar, saying sternly: "I have pardoned enough for one day," gave the signal to set out for the Circus. His guests flocked out and arranged themselves

in procession; the thirty-six lictors—a greater number than any man in Rome had been allowed since the expulsion of the Tarquin kings centuries ago—formed up outside the Regia with their laurel-wreathed fasces—also voted to Caesar in perpetuity by the Senate—and after a suitable pause Caesar himself stepped out into the street.

A roar of welcome greeted him from the assembled crowd: "Hail, Caesar! Caesar! Caesar!" Citizens rushed at him from every side with gifts and petitions; Caesar had found it necessary to appoint a slave with the single duty of receiving these, and the man's arms were full in a mere moment. Slowly the huge procession wound its way down to the Circus Maximus: Caesar pressed the pace as much as he dared, for he greatly disliked to be late.

"Come, come!" he called out good-humouredly to the thronging crowd who impeded him: "We must not keep those already in the Circus waiting for their pleasure."

Delighted by this evidence of consideration, the people divided to let him through.

At last the formalities were over; Caesar had taken his gilded seat (voted him by the Senate), the preliminary procession had made its tour of the amphitheatre, the games had begun. Everyone's attention was fixed on the arena, where the sacred boys' game of "Troy" was in progress, and Caesar had leisure to reflect on a question which every day pressed upon him more. The question was: why did he feel so acutely uneasy, irritable and wretched? Why did he, who had always enjoyed life, even its worst moments, with such zest and gusto, now that he had achieved all his ambition, enjoy nothing any more?

Why was he not, for instance, enjoying these games? He had enjoyed games well enough in the past, and the scene was just the same: in the distance the peaked Alban mountains, a rich dark blue against the lighter blue of the sunny Roman sky; on the left the sculptured City gate; behind him the Palatine, with its fine white houses amid dark poplars,

whose tips were curving deliciously in the morning breeze; in the foreground the huge sandy oval of the Circus, and the rising tiers of seats crammed with two hundred and fifty thousand of the people of Rome. They were his guests, and they were enjoying themselves; Caesar loved to see people enjoy themselves; why could he not enjoy himself too? Caesar probed his mind to find the source of his dissatisfaction. Did it perhaps lie in some of the arrangements for the games? No, surely not; the new silken awning was a success, the wine contract satisfactory, the programme excellent. The mimes, the wild animals, the torchlight procession of elephants, the gladiators, were all the best of their kind—he had seen to them himself; while the revival of the “Troy” game, which had fallen into desuetude during the civil war, was both popular and respectable—Cato himself could not have objected to it, thought Caesar sardonically, since he had taken part in the game, it was said, in his youth. It was true that Octavius, who was to have led one side of the “Troy” game, unfortunately had a cold and could not take part, sitting instead amongst the spectators near his great-uncle. This was disappointing, but a small matter after all, reflected Caesar; it need not prevent his own enjoyment of the games.

But it was not only the games he could not enjoy, he might as well admit it; he enjoyed nothing, nothing at all. Why? He ought to be most happy, for he had achieved his ambition, succeeded even beyond his dreams; he was supreme ruler of Rome, able to mould as he wished the Roman State.

Just and benevolent measures have flowed from my pen, argued Caesar to himself; surely I may think of them with pride. I have purged the corrupt courts of justice, passed stern sumptuary ordinances, hardened the penalties for crime; I am revising the whole body of civil law. To relieve the intolerable weight of private debt I have remitted a proportion of the interest, neither too little to be valueless

nor too much to upset the general financial balance. I have expelled senators convicted of bribery from office, adjusted the taxes, revised the free corn list, confining it to citizens in genuine need. I have arranged the conditions of military service more equitably, and cut down the term of military commands—I mean there to be no more Caesars, whose soldiers are bound to them by ten years' service and constant rewards. To re-populate Italy, so terribly drained by these years of civil war, I have enacted that senators' sons may not leave the country except on State business, I have ordered that all cattle-farmers should employ a certain proportion of free herdsmen, I am offering rewards to the fathers of many children. I am embellishing the City with fine buildings; I mean to divert the Tiber to improve the port of Ostia, and drain the surrounding marsh. I have given to various physicians, and men learned in the liberal arts, the freedom of the City, to encourage them to settle in Rome; I have allotted sums for the purchase of books, and entrusted Varro, though a Pompeian, with the formation of a splendid library for the public use, because he is the most learned man in Rome. Surely I can take pride in all this, reflected Caesar. Then, too, I have pursued no man in revenge; I have restored the dowries of the wives of the slain, and granted their children a share of the property; I have granted forgiveness to every Pompeian I reasonably could, and even to some where its safety was doubtful. I have allowed Cicero and other reputable opponents to live in retirement in the country, and only gently and gradually urged them back into public life. There has been no large proscription; I have rewarded my friends in the mildest manner possible, by making them members of the Senate, or granting them consulships for a few months, so that they might enjoy consular rank. I appoint men to provinces according to suitability, not by lot, which always seemed to me a foolish and unreliable method, and I have never appointed an unsuitable man; indeed, in one or two cases where supporters

of mine expected provinces who were not fitted to the posts, I have actually given them money privately to assuage their disappointment. All the provinces are therefore in good and friendly hands; the public finance is sound, justice improving, the army loyal; my power is secure, as these continued honours poured on me by the Senate show; large numbers of citizens all over Italy are devoted. Why then do I have this constant feeling of unease, dissatisfaction, almost guilt?

He sighed; the games wearied him unspeakably, especially as he had to listen with one ear to a torrent of enthusiastic praises on every item from his plump good-natured wife Calpurnia, with the other to the deliberately mysterious monosyllables of the dark Egyptian queen. Really these doting women are insufferably fatiguing, reflected Caesar with impatience. His sense of justice reminded him that he had made love to both in the past, and both were still young and handsome.

"Decidedly I am growing old," thought Caesar with another sigh.

His eyes roved for Servilia, but she was absent—she did not care for games. Her new daughter-in-law was also absent, Caesar observed with a frown; but Brutus was there, next to his friend, the sour-faced Cassius, and Tertia. On the right of Brutus sat his step-sister Junia and her newly-married husband Lepidus—an officer of Caesar's, son to the long-dead Lepidus of the conspiracy, and about as much use, reflected Caesar—and then came her brother, Servilia's second son, Decius Silanus; at the moment when Caesar looked round this young man had his head thrown back in a very hearty laugh. Silanus was an ordinary lad, like his father, with none of the distinguished quality of Brutus, but he had Servilia's grey eyes and a cheerful honest spirit, and Caesar liked him. Caesar smiled now, therefore, and leaning back in his gilded chair called out gaily: "What is the joke, my boy?"

The moment he felt the Dictator's eyes upon him Silanus removed the laugh from his face, sat up, hitched at his toga and put on a solemn air; when Caesar, amused, repeated his question the young man turned scarlet and looked deeply embarrassed. Brutus too appeared a little distressed, and Lepidus gazed stiffly ahead as though to dissociate himself from the incident, while Cassius' lean saturnine face took on a sour smile, so that Caesar rather repented his question, and hoped Silanus would have the sense to pretend to misunderstand it. Silanus, however, had inherited his father's clumsy honesty rather than his mother's tact, and blurted out confusedly:

"I was only telling my sister about Caius Octavius—he has a cold—he told me—he is wearing four tunics and a flannel stomacher."

In spite of his alarm at his disrespect to the Dictator's great-nephew, Silanus could not suppress another giggle at this last word, and Tertia joined in with her soft laugh, so like her mother's. Caesar looked down his nose with a disapproving air, but he did not attempt to conceal his smile. For indeed his heart felt lighter, not only because he was fond of Servilia's children, or on account of the stomacher—though a side-glance at Octavius revealed that he was certainly very much muffled up—but because he had perhaps found the source of his unease, in his great-nephew and heir. Octavius was certainly an odd lad, with his snuffling colds and his wool wraps and his dislike of fighting, and not the lad Caesar would have chosen for his heir. But he was not a fool—O, not at all a fool, reflected Caesar; he was shrewd and sly and cunning, and almost always got what he wanted, when other people had finished fighting for it; besides, he sometimes lifted his meek eyelids and shot out a piercing glance whose quality Caesar recognised with respect, for it was like his own. So why trouble himself about Octavius? In any case, it was useless to vex oneself because other people were not as one could wish, for

they never were and could not be made so ; they must be accepted as themselves, and used thus, to one's own best advantage.

" I have known that all my life ; surely I have not forgotten it now," reflected Caesar impatiently.

But if the root of his discomfort was not Octavius—and it was not ; it was the discomfort which made Octavius tiresome, not Octavius the discomfort—where then did it lie ? In despair of finding any answer Caesar held up his finger to a lictor, and bade him fetch the slave who dealt with the state accounts. The man brought the papers, and Caesar, falling avidly to work on them, felt better. Perhaps my discomfort is nothing but a slight indisposition, he decided, which disturbs my nights and darkens my days. Perhaps I have an internal chill ; the wind here certainly blows a little cold ; doubtless Octavius is wise in his stomacher. He felt a strong desire to talk Octavius over with somebody, laugh about him and clear his mind on the subject by discussion ; but there was nobody to whom he could so forfeit his dignity as to laugh about his own heir. Except Servilia. Ah ! He summoned a lictor again, and despatched him with a message to Servilia that he would dine with her. When the man returned, he brought with him despatches from Alexandria ; Caesar set to work on them eagerly.

At long last the tedious programme for the day was over, and Caesar congratulated himself on having maintained—except for a jeer or two at the author of some very poor dramatic verses, to whom he promptly applied the soothing balm of gold—his urbanity throughout. It had cost him a considerable effort, however, and his discomfort, whatever it was, seemed blacker than ever by the time he had passed through the cheering jostling crowds and reached his home. " It *must* be my health," Caesar told himself impatiently. He took an emetic, bathed, oiled and put on a very handsome flowered tunic, dictated a few letters and set off to the house of Silanus determined to enjoy himself.

Somewhat to his disappointment there were other guests at table.

For Servilia, indeed, the day had on this very score been a trying one. The moment Caesar's intention to dine with her became known—and every intention of Caesar's became known as fast as money could buy it—she was pestered with requests from friends and acquaintances who wished to be his fellow-diners; even at the games notes were written in this sense, and slaves despatched. It was such a privilege to dine with Caesar, and so much advantage might accrue as a result, that to secure the privilege ambitious Romans stopped short at nothing; they scarcely ventured to offer to bribe her, it was true, but several suddenly became desirous of making her handsome presents. The first time this had happened, some months ago upon Caesar's return from Spain, Servilia in indignant scorn had desired her husband to inform Caesar that they could not receive him; but Silanus gave her such a look of horror, and asked her in such alarm if she wished to ruin him, that she was obliged to let that pass. "Let us at least have no other guests," she contended, and Silanus had seemed to acquiesce. At the table, however, several guests had appeared; when she reproached her husband later he told her frankly that they had begged the invitation, and he had not dared to refuse for fear of making enemies. The times were too dangerous to make enemies, he said. So, now, when Caesar signified his desire to dine at her husband's house, Servilia hastened to invite guests so as to have a good excuse for not inviting those who begged it, and without intending any mercenary calculation, found herself inviting the friends she cared for most—whose advancement, therefore, as it must appear to the City, she cared for most. She hated this appearance of corruption passionately, but could not, it seemed, avoid it.

There were many other matters concerning herself and Caesar which she hated but seemed unable to avoid. The strangeness, the discomfort, of the past months since his

triumphant return to Rome were overpowering; Caesar mounted and mounted, and she was swept along in his train, her privacy, her notions of what was decent and right, callously violated in the rush of events. Even her husband put no obstacle in the way of her intimacy with the Dictator—to-night, for instance, he would probably discreetly discover some early appointment in the country which necessitated an all-night journey—and when Caesar made her presents of a villa or a pearl, urged her, indeed commanded her, to accept them. Surviving Pompeians not of the first rank, living in exile abroad, positively wrote obsequious letters imploring her assistance, and the house was thronged each morning by Romans “in the know,” who called on Silanus because his wife was Caesar’s mistress. All this seemed to Servilia an increasing and intolerable insult; her heart burned with it, and she longed to recall her lover to a sense of what was fitting, both to herself and to the Republic. To-night, for one reason and another, her heart was particularly heavy, and at table she could not refrain—though her husband glanced at her uneasily as she spoke—from hinting to Caesar the rumours she had heard that day: that the carrying of his image in the procession at the Circus beside those of the gods, and his reading and writing during the games, had displeased the people, who thought both actions indecorous and arrogant. Servilia agreed with this view, and did not trouble to conceal her agreement.

Caesar, who had been reclining heavily as if tired, and preserving a somewhat morose silence, at once exerted himself to efface the impression of arrogance. He began to talk and joke with his customary brilliance and affability, and the other guests all bent towards him, smiling obsequiously. Servilia however listened to him with a deep anger. She hated to hear him talk in that easy tone of command, as if he were the acknowledged superior of everyone present; doubtless the habit sprang from his long years in camp, where as

the Republic's general he had so long held the supreme position, but it was not on that account any more agreeable to a Roman ear. He spoke, too, as if he were the unquestioned, the acknowledged, superior of everyone present in mental stature; Servilia burned to tell him that he really must not treat the intelligence of all Romans—the learned Varro was actually at the table!—as if it were, compared with his, on a level with Antony's.

But when they were at last alone, and Caesar lay with his head on her breast, she could not reproach him. The animation was wiped from his face as if with a cloth, leaving the deep lines, the hollows, the drooping eyelids, of an immense fatigue, behind. His haggard face, his thinning hair, the stoop of his shoulders, once so proudly and easily erect, filled her with concern; she laid her hands on his forehead and found it burning.

"You are ill, Caius!" she exclaimed. "You have caught cold at the games?"

"I should have worn four tunics," murmured Caesar with a smile. He described the precautions of Octavius, with so much wit that Servilia was reassured, but also with some sadness. "I don't know what to make of the boy," he said.

"It would perhaps be well to send him away for a time, out of the shield of—" began Servilia, and hesitated.

"My power? Perhaps you are right," said Caesar. "By the way, where was Brutus to-night?"

This touched the fringe of Servilia's deepest bitterness, for Brutus ever since Pharsalia had treated his mother with a chilling correctness far removed from their old intimacy, and to-night was only one of a series of occasions when he had politely excused himself. She paused a moment, therefore, before she forced herself to answer quietly:

"He has a new wife, so his own hearth is most agreeable to him."

"I take it very unkindly of Brutus to marry Porcia," said

Caesar in a peevish tone. "Cato's daughter ! Cato was the only man who ever got the better of me, and he had to die to do it." He tittered, pleased with this witticism, but Servilia did not respond. "Why should Brutus marry my enemies ?" persisted Caesar. "Isn't he satisfied with me ? I've done much for him, and for his friend Cassius for his sake, though I dislike the man and always did."

"He is a little soured, perhaps," agreed Servilia, glad to turn the conversation away from Brutus and Porcia.

"He was born sour," said Caesar with emphasis, remembering a game of nuts he had been snubbed in, some thirty years ago. Cassius had a peevish grudging air, even then, as a child. "But why did Brutus marry Porcia ?"

"He is in love with her, my dear," said Servilia. She spoke quietly, but her heart began to beat fast, in fear.

"Really ?" said Caesar, interested. "With Cato's daughter ? I can't imagine a daughter of Cato lovable—I see her as square and bony, with a face like a horse." He tittered again, pleased with his own skill in description.

Servilia waited in anguish for his next words. If he should ask her : "What do you think of Porcia ?"—what should she say ? The truth was that Porcia would not receive her, would not speak to her, beyond what was absolutely necessary for family duty ; Servilia had been shown she was not welcome at her son's house, nor had Porcia ever entered that of Silanus. All this hostility, as Servilia knew well, was due to her own relationship with Caesar. She surveyed with horror a situation which, for the first time in her life, she dared not tell to Caesar ; she dared not rouse his resentment against Brutus and Porcia, for so great was his power, there was no limit to the harm he might do to them. That this should be so was so terribly wrong that she felt broken under it. Always before she had told her troubles to Caesar and found comfort. She exerted herself now to remain still and quiet as if untroubled, and fortunately, as she thought, Caesar noticed nothing, for he did not pursue the subject.

In reality Caesar was not as insensitive as she imagined. He perceived well enough that she was sad, and that something troubled their love, but he declined to find out what it was, to-night. He was tired, fearfully tired, and if he pursued the matter Servilia would probably say something disapproving, as she had done at dinner. Caesar really could not decide, he told himself, which expression he disliked more; the look of wanting, asking for something, obsequious request, which had marked every other face at the table, or the disapproval on Servilia's. Since his final victory both these expressions were highly distasteful to him; to-night at least he would endure them no more. He sighed, and sank abruptly into a heavy sleep.

Servilia was woken by a voice at her side which muttered thickly. Alarmed, she drew the table-lamp towards her and held it up to look at Caesar. He lay with wide-open eyes, pouring out a stream of disjointed phrases, in which Rome and the consulship and Julia and Pompey were mixed with military terms and orders to his men. His head, she noticed with concern, was soaked in sweat. She spoke his name urgently, and a struggle to understand her seemed to take place behind his eyes.

"Do you know me, Caius?" she asked, bending over him.

"Of course," replied Caesar crossly; not, however, speaking her name. "But where am I?" he added in a peevish despairing tone. "What is this place?" His eyes roved about the room, anxiously searching its delicate wall-paintings of flower-garlands, and Servilia's combs and mirrors on the table. "It isn't Gaul, or Spain," he said distressed: "Or Egypt. Perhaps it's Thessaly. I don't know."

He sighed unhappily, and Servilia felt the hot tears in her eyes.

"You are in Rome, Caius," she told him clearly. "At my house, in Rome."

He stared at her, and suddenly his eyes cleared and he was himself again. "What have I said?" he exclaimed, seeing her tears. "I am often strange at night of late—you must not mind."

"If you are often like this you are ill, Caius," said Servilia, weeping.

"No—only tired," said Caesar. "One is not," he repeated grimly, "at one's freshest after fourteen years of war. Please put down the lamp," he added in his usual courteous and affable tone: "It is dazzling to the eyes."

"I will pour some wine—I will fetch vinegar for your head," urged Servilia.

"No. They are useless. I want only rest," said Caesar wearily. He looked up at her with an attempt at his brilliant smile, and murmured: "I am only at peace when I am with you."

Servilia set down the lamp and kept her face hidden for a moment. It seemed to her too ironic to be borne that Caesar should find peace with her, whose peace he had so utterly destroyed. He had brought her torment, loneliness and at last public reproach, forced her whole life into an unnatural mould, deprived her of the affection of son and husband. But when all was said, she loved him beyond any of these things, and all she cared for now was to comfort him in this distress. She took him on her breast and laid cool hands on his burning forehead, murmured words of loving comfort in his ear. Caesar relaxed and lay still.

"Nothing in the world is worth doing any more," he murmured. "I have lived long enough."

"Caius, Caius!" Servilia reproached him fondly.

After a moment, gathering her courage, she bent over him and murmured in his ear:

"Why not give it all up and retire? Like Sulla?"

"What!" exclaimed Caesar. He raised himself on one thin elbow and stared at her in amazement, his quick mind at once drawing vivid pictures of himself after abdication:

powerless, workless, at ease. An expression of disgust crossed his face ; his grey eyes flashed. “ Sulla was a fool ! ” he said.

In the morning when Caesar awoke, refreshed by a long sleep, it seemed to him that some question which had long been troubling him was now settled, some sore place calloused, though not healed. For some reason he could not discover he had no zest for life ; his nights were atrocious, his days exhausting ; the mingled stupidity and obsequiousness of the Senate exasperated increasingly his now irritable temper ; pleasure was a weariness, work a fatigue. Very well ! All that was very tiresome, but it was also, it seemed, inevitable ; it must be accepted, it must be borne. He must go on, continue in his course, for he could not bear to turn aside ; to cease to be what he had made himself was unthinkable. Servilia seemed silent and unfriendly this morning, he saw. Well ! That too was of little importance, and must be borne.

DEATH OF A DICTATOR

CASSIUS AND HIS WIFE were dining with Brutus and Porcia, and the four now sat at talk together in the library. This was a long closed colonnade which Brutus had added to his father's house, where he now resided; it was lined with cases of book-rolls, adorned with statues and inscriptions, and paved with patterned marble brought from Greece. On one of the columns, between a fine bust of Minerva and a statue of that old Brutus who drove the Tarquin kings from Rome, was displayed a genealogical table of his family, made by Atticus, Cicero's banker friend, at Brutus' request. On the parchment was noted the birth of all the ancestors of Brutus, with the office each man had held. Brutus was deeply attached to this room of his house, which he liked to call his Parthenon; he felt more at ease, more himself, here with the scent of the cedar oil coating the books in his nostrils and the orderly cases of rolls, each with its title label, before his eyes, than anywhere else; he loved to move quietly about the place, alone, or with Porcia's old old slave, the Greek schoolmaster, Sarpedon, glancing at every title as he passed, savouring the most recent additions to his fine collection, planning how to fill its gaps, pulling out a roll here and there to re-read some favourite passage, becoming lost to time in the nobility of the sense, the grave beauty of the words. His Parthenon was not, however, a place which he considered particularly suited to the entertainment of Cassius, who belonged, as it were, to another side of his life, and he was surprised when the slaves, evidently by pre-arrangement with Porcia, had lighted them there.

Porcia had a purpose in this, as indeed in every, action. It was now February of the year following her marriage to Brutus and Caesar's victorious return from Spain. Brutus and Cassius were both, by the command of Caesar, praetors for this year, but Caesar had given the first place on the list to Servilia's son. This angered Cassius, who thought his services in Parthia entitled him to higher consideration than his brother-in-law, and he treated Brutus for a time with irritable hostility. Brutus, unable by nature to understand a jealous envy of this kind, and well accustomed to displays of petulant temper from Cassius without cause, remained quite unaware of the serious nature of his friend's resentment until Porcia one day impatiently enlightened him. The result of her communication astonished her. Her husband's sallow, dreamy face suddenly broke, as it were, into thunder and lightning; exclaiming: "What! Impossible!" he rushed from the house with a most unwonted energy, threw himself into that of Cassius, though it was late at night, and in a rapid uneven tone declared to his friend that he would give up the first place among the praetors—he did not want it, did not deserve it; he was about to tell Caesar so at once. Cassius was thoroughly alarmed; such a step, with its obvious motive, would bring down on his own head all Caesar's barely concealed dislike. He seized his friend's arm and besought him to do nothing rash; "You'll ruin me!" he said. "Not so," insisted Brutus emphatically: "I will retire from the praetorship altogether, rather than occupy a position which is not my due." Cassius, grinding his teeth in exasperation, for his safety's sake was obliged to lie, to assure his friend that in his opinion nobody in all Rome deserved the place more than Brutus. As he spoke, and Brutus listened with flushed cheek and fiery eye, unconvinced, Cassius found his lie reluctantly becoming truth, for he could not help being moved by the unthinking nobility of his friend's act. His voice therefore took on, though somewhat grudgingly, a note of conviction, and Brutus' incredulity

relaxed. At this moment Tertia, who, though Porcia found her stupid, had a considerable feminine tact and loved both her husband and her brother very dearly, rushed weeping into the room and threw herself between the two men. The reconciliation was complete—at least for this night; as the days went on Cassius wavered between a real love for his friend and an irritation which after all was natural enough. Porcia earnestly desired the two men to remain friends, though not from the same motive as her sister-in-law, and she felt that it was her part to convince Cassius of the truth that Brutus, though doubtless a less experienced and probably less able soldier, was better fitted to lead in Rome than his friend. To-night, therefore—the first time Cassius had dined with them since the quarrel—she wished to display her husband as the intellectual superior of Cassius, and she found the library best suited to that purpose.

The conversation turned, as every conversation in Rome turned sooner or later, upon Caesar. A series of incidents had lately taken place, peculiarly distressing and disagreeable to the Roman mind; they discussed these now. The first had occurred at the close of the previous year when the Senate, having voted some very flattering honours to Caesar in a session from which he was absent, decided to flatter him still further by announcing the decrees to him in a body, at once. He was seated in his chair of state on the steps of the temple to Venus which he had erected in his new Forum, engaged in deciding the site for a statue of Twotoes which was to be placed there, when the Senate, duly headed by the consuls and other magistrates, came to him. To the horror of everyone present Caesar did not rise at their approach, but actually received them sitting, as though his authority were higher than their own. The consuls were so completely taken aback that they could hardly stammer out the terms of the decrees, and Caesar's reply still further disconcerted them, for he remarked impatiently that he had too many useless honours of that kind already—they needed

to be diminished rather than increased. This speech, it was true, might be taken in a sound Republican sense, but coupled with the insult of their reception, seemed to indicate on the contrary an arrogance unparalleled since the days of the kings.

"But he is ill—perhaps he did not rise because he was ill," pleaded Tertia mildly.

"Yes, that may be so," conceded Brutus, who was leaning against one of the columns, with folded arms, looking down at the rest of the company.

"He walked home an hour later," sneered Cassius. "A strangely sudden illness!"

The incident had certainly shocked the sensitive political feeling of Rome, but it might have been forgotten in time if it had not been followed by others, even more unfortunate. The new statue of Caesar in the Forum Julium was found one morning adorned with a crown. Horrified by this hint of monarchy, two tribunes of the people at once removed the offending symbol. All good Romans approved of this action, and though there was an uneasiness in the minds of some, caused by the coupling of the two incidents of arrogance threatened and arrogance real, most citizens felt that Caesar should not be held responsible for the excesses of his more foolish partisans, and dismissed the matter as awkward but unimportant. A few days later, however, as Caesar was returning to Rome along the Via Appia from a brief holiday in the Alban Mountains, voices in the crowd which went out to welcome him greeted him as king. A shocked silence at once fell on the rest of the crowd, and Caesar cried out hastily: "My name is not King, but Caesar." His affable smile and neat rejoinder reassured the crowd, who gave him a hearty cheer, and the same two tribunes who had torn down the crown made it their business to discover the men who had called out in a manner so unbecoming a Roman, and prosecute them. At this point Caesar lost his temper and deprived the tribunes of their office. A deep gloom fell on

Rome as this news spread through the City. The inference was all too plain; Caesar liked to be called, perhaps even wished to be considered, king. In the old senatorial families there was a hot indignation, which presently changed to a cold creeping fear as they looked about and saw Caesar's centurions, and barbarians accustomed to despotic rule, crowding the Senate. Surely this thing could never be again in Rome! A life-long Dictator was bad, but the duties and powers of a Dictator were at least traditional, defined by law, while lives, even Dictators' lives, necessarily came to an end. Rome had had Dictators before, and weathered them. But if Caesar made himself king! Took absolute power as a perpetual family possession!

"I do not see that it would be of great importance," observed Porcia when the discussion reached this point, in her clear firm tones.

The men exclaimed, astounded both by the sentiment itself, and that Porcia should utter it—Porcia who still wore her dark robe, in mourning for the Republic.

"How would Rome then differ from Rome now?" continued Porcia calmly. "Seeing that Caesar already disposes of our lives, our possessions and our liberties, as he will."

This provoked her hearers, as she meant it should.

"That's very true! And why should we spend our lives obeying his orders, waiting for him to die before we are free?" cried Cassius in his harsh sneering tones. "He is no better soldier, of no better birth, than many another man."

"It would be different—it would be worse," said Brutus slowly.

"Why?" said Porcia, pleased to have drawn him into argument.

"It would mean," said Brutus, beginning to pace slowly up and down the colonnade, "that not only the healthy sap and blood of our old constitution would be gone, but also its colour and outward show. These are not to be separated

—their life has a common source—they are a man and his skin; if you pull one from the other both die.”

As he spoke these words, his profound belief in them, and his love of Rome, began to animate him, and overcame his habitual shy reserve; his eyes glowed, he flung up his head, his voice rang out sonorously. The others listened with a close attention which showed how great was their trust in him, greater perhaps than they altogether knew.

“Where one man has all the power, the others must necessarily all be powerless,” continued Brutus. “Where one man alone can confer wealth and honour, the others can only gain it by pleasing him. His pleasure therefore becomes the only test of achievement. With such a standard, how can a state do other than decay! All vigour, all independence of life and thought, are necessarily abandoned. And is this not already clearly shown?” he continued, turning to his hearers and flinging out his hands, quite forgetting himself in the earnestness of his demonstration. “What a decay of Roman dignity! What a decline of Roman character! How any free-born Roman can endure such obsequious flattery, such degraded petitions, as are poured on Caesar every day, is beyond my power to understand. His temper is daily more irritable, they say; is it to be wondered? To consort habitually with slaves, with men of worthless character, lacking in courage, truth and honesty, must weary any Roman, much more a Roman of the mind and force of Caesar. Yet so he must do, for there are now no men of any other kind; he has made all Romans slaves.”

Tertia sighed. She was sorry for all this hostility to Caesar, for she had liked Caesar all her life, and found it difficult to change her affections so abruptly. Caesar had given her many a shining copper coin, a handful of nuts, a coloured fish, when she was a child, and thought himself well rewarded by stroking her soft cheek with a careful finger; now he was grown harsh and cross, they said, and her husband commanded her to hate him. It was very sad.

"He pardoned you—he has passed many good laws, conferring benefits on the people," she murmured now.

"We do not want benefits conferred by him," snapped Cassius angrily. "Why should he give us what is our own, and expect our thanks?"

"True—very true. Liberty takes itself; it cannot be given," approved Brutus, looking at the statue of his ancestor with burning eyes.

"Why do you talk thus?" said Porcia in a tone of contempt. They all looked at her, Tertia uncomfortably, the two men in surprise. "What is the use of such talk?" said Porcia. "Talk is no use. Actions alone can count. Both of you hold office under Caesar; you stand here and talk about the degradation of the Republic, but you do nothing against him, nothing! If you would act against him, then I might believe you love Rome."

Brutus sighed heavily, and his fire left him; his head drooped, his hands fell to his sides. "It is difficult to know what to do," he murmured at length, staring at the floor. "Our power of constitutional action seems already destroyed."

Cassius on the other hand gave Porcia a strange look, full of meaning. At first she could not credit what she read there; she met his eyes again, and believed. Her heart beat fast, bells seemed to ring in her ears. She leaned forward at once and spoke.

"Tertia," she said in a more friendly tone than she usually found it in her heart to employ to Brutus' sister, "will you not come and see my little son asleep? He fell and cut his lip to-day—I should like you to advise me."

"Cut his lip!" exclaimed Brutus, looking up. He was very fond of his little stepson, so fond indeed as to irritate Porcia at times, who thought so much love should be reserved for a child of his own. "You did not tell me."

"It is nothing—but I should like Tertia to see him," said Porcia hastily.

Tertia, who was a devoted mother, smiled happily at the prospect of tending a child, and rose. The two women moved away towards the entrance to the house.

"I think perhaps it is Antony who wants Caesar to be king, who persuades him to it," Tertia could be heard saying in an apologetic tone. "Antony is so horrid."

"Men are known by the company they keep," replied Porcia sternly.

There was silence for a few moments after they had gone. Cassius was in doubt how best to broach the matter he had in mind, to his friend; it was deeply important that Brutus should not be offended at its first onset, for his support was very necessary, yet the matter might very well sound offensive to his compassionate ear. Cassius therefore sat turning his words over in his mind. He was just about to speak when Brutus, with a heavy sigh, moved away to one of the book-cases, and drew out a handful of small sheets of paper.

"What do you think of these communications?" he said, offering them to Cassius.

Cassius, screwing up his eyes, which had been somewhat affected by the Parthian sun, examined them, not altogether with surprise. They were coarsely written, and the cheap paper showed signs of exposure to the weather; obviously they were satiric placards such as the people of Rome sometimes used, to tell public men what they thought of their behaviour.

"Where did you find them?" enquired Cassius.

"Some on my praetor's chair in the law-courts," replied Brutus. "Some on my ancestor's statue in the Forum."

Cassius smiled; for he had the opening he desired. Two of the placards, which had evidently come from the statue of the expeller of the Tarquin kings, read: *Thou should'st be living at this hour!* and *Your posterity is unworthy of you*; while those from Brutus' official chair said: *We need a Brutus, Brutus, awake!* and *Brutus, remember your ancestors.*

Brutus, frowning, said in a troubled tone :

"It seems to me these refer to Caesar's designs on the kingship. They urge me to take action against him, even as my ancestor drove out the Tarquins. Do you not think so ? "

"Undoubtedly," said Cassius, delighted that Brutus should himself state the matter thus plainly. "And I do not think," he added, choosing his words with care, "that only poor citizens and freedmen have written these placards. Some of the highest men in Rome are, I believe, responsible."

"Why do you think that ? " said Brutus quickly.

Cassius stepped near to him. "There is a plan afoot," he murmured, his lips close to Brutus' ear, "to take action against Caesar—to deprive him of all opportunity of becoming king. Your support, your influence, are needed. Will you join us ? "

"But of course ! " exclaimed Brutus, his face bright with relief and hope. "I will join any plan for restoring the true constitution of the Republic. It is not from choice that I merely talk, as Porcia says, and do nothing. What is the plan ? "

Cassius was silent, but stared fixedly in his friend's eyes. After a moment Brutus started and coloured.

"Not——? " he murmured.

Cassius nodded.

"Nothing in the nature of a proscription," he added hastily, seeing revulsion in Brutus' face. "Nothing of that kind is intended. You say yourself that Caesar alone is now the source of all power, the source, that is, of all the difficulties of the Republic. Remove him, and we remove all those difficulties."

"I must think," said Brutus slowly, with an air of distaste. "I must consider."

"There are many of us in the plan," urged Cassius. He gave a list of names which indeed included some of the most eminent men in Rome.

"Cicero ? " queried Brutus.

"That old trimmer!" sneered Cassius. "No, indeed! His age—his habit of prolonged logical discussion," he added hastily, watching every change of expression on Brutus' face, "make him unfitted for such a plan. But he will surely approve the deed when done."

"I will consider," repeated Brutus, turning away.

"And if, while you are considering, Caesar makes himself king?" sneered Cassius.

"If Caesar takes one more step towards kingship, I will join you," said Brutus firmly.

"It is a fair decision," said the delighted Cassius in a smooth tone. He wondered whether to ask Brutus' permission to tell others of his decision in order to influence them, but decided to leave it alone. As long as Brutus had not forbidden this course, he could follow it.

"It would be Caesar only?" demanded Brutus.

Cassius hesitated. "Some suggest Antony," he admitted.

"No, no!" said Brutus strongly. "To kill Caesar as a tyrant may be a necessary and noble act, but if we include others we become mere murderers."

"I am sure we shall all follow your counsels, if you join us," said Cassius, half calculating, half sincere.

"Hush! Here are the women," murmured Brutus.

Cassius, who did not wish to blur the impression he had made on his friend's mind by other talk, at once took leave, hurrying away Tertia, whose mild dreamy face showed surprise but no objection at this sudden change of plan. When they had left, Brutus turned to his wife:

"Why did you not tell me of the child's fall before?" he said reproachfully.

"It was nothing. I took Tertia away because I thought Cassius had something he wished to say to you alone," said Porcia.

As Brutus made no reply, Porcia, in whose dark eyes the golden lights were gleaming, abruptly produced a small scroll of paper from the folds of her dress. It was similar

to those Brutus had already shown to Cassius that night.

"Why have you this? Where did you find it?" said Brutus, unrolling it with an air of distaste. His tone was sharper than was usual with him towards his wife, and Porcia smiled sardonically.

"Sarpedon found it in the garden," she said. She hesitated, then added: "I have read it, Marcus."

Take down the genealogy in your library; you are not HIS descendant, read Brutus. He frowned, and looked up to find his wife's gaze fixed on him. She remained silent, but her dark gown, her gleaming eyes, the tension of her fine nostril, the ironic curve of her firm lip, spoke louder than words what she thought of the taunt.

"It is of no importance," said Brutus stiffly, crumpling the scroll in one hand.

"And what Cassius had to say to you—is that too of no importance?" demanded Porcia.

Brutus raised his eyes and met hers steadily. "It is too important to be spoken of between you and me," he said.

Porcia, sure now of Cassius' intention, smiled with a sombre triumph.

"Is it not a pity to revive these stupid festivals?" said Servilia. "In the days when Rome was a collection of shepherds' huts, doubtless they had meaning; now they are mere opportunities for coarse horse-play, unworthy of the City."

"They give the City something to occupy its mind," retorted Caesar, who was signing letters in the winter colonnade of one of the handsome country villas he had given her. "Festivals are a useful branch of government."

"Caius!" exclaimed Servilia reproachfully.

Caesar, without looking up, frowned, and she said no more. She was not sure whether she remained silent from fear or from mere regard to the presence of the slave holding his letters, and scorned herself lest it might be fear. For in

the last few months not merely any criticism, but even any comment at all on his actions was increasingly resented by Caesar—he was positively offended when anyone ventured to discuss any matter with him, and had been heard to mutter angrily about impertinence when, in a philosophic conversation at a dinner table, someone said casually: “I disagree.” Servilia felt so diminished, so degraded, at the notion of being afraid to speak her mind to any Roman, much less to one who had been her lifelong friend and lover, that her heart burned and her head throbbed, and she nerved herself to express her view of government by festival with force and point, as soon as the slave should have left them alone.

“Why are people so stupid?” cried Caesar suddenly, tearing a paper across and across with furious movements of his bony wrists. “Why can’t they obey orders, do as they are told without arguing? All this delay! The fools!”

He almost screamed some instructions to the frightened slave beside him, who fled away to re-write the letter about provisions for Parthia, trembling.

There was again silence. Servilia now really dreaded to speak, not for her own sake but for Caesar’s; these bursts of disordered anger must surely diminish him in his own eyes as in those of others, she thought, and she did not want to excite him to another. Caesar continued to sign papers and tablets, throwing them petulantly on the floor, as there was no slave to receive them from his hand.

“I take it,” he said suddenly in a quick cross tone, without looking up: “that you do not intend to be present at the Lupercalia?”

“I shall not be present,” replied Servilia quietly.

“That’s a pity,” said Caesar with a high titter which was almost a sneer: “For had you been there you might have seen something interesting.”

“Caius,” said Servilia quickly, “surely you do not intend another of these foolish kingship incidents?”

Caesar gave an impatient exclamation. “Listen, my

dear," he said: "I am tired of these continual hints, these constant criticisms, from you on the subject of my public proceedings. They are not becoming from you to me. You are a mere woman, I am the head of the Roman state—what I say is law."

"I am a free-born Roman," said Servilia in her gravest tones. "If you do not desire me thus, leave me, for I can be no other."

Caesar gave her an irritable glance; she raised her head and met it proudly with her own clear grey eyes, calm and steadfast as of old. It was long since he had looked at her with such attention. His eyes were the first to fall; he twisted the pen restlessly in his fingers, and spoke in a more conciliatory tone.

"I can do great things for Rome," he said. "What does it matter under what title I do them?"

"If the title does not matter, why take it?" countered Servilia. "No, Caius; it is the reality, of absolute perpetual despotic power, at which you aim, and the people are beginning to know it and resent it. You mean to destroy the Republic for ever."

"The Republic, the Republic; what is the Republic?" said Caesar testily. "A Republic is only a name, without substance or reality. It is a fair-sounding name, I grant you, giving the impression of equal rights for all through equal laws, but its results, as surely you must have seen in the past thirty years, do not agree at all with its title. Democracy inevitably means delay and confusion. Despotism, on the other hand, has an unpleasant sound, especially said as you say it, but it is a much more practical form of government to live under. For it is easier to find a single able and well-meaning man than many. Most men are fools."

"As long as a tree lives, it may grow fine and tall, even though slowly and with many twistings," said Servilia. "But you want to stretch it to twice its length at once, by force. When you have finished, the tree will be dead."

"The tree? What tree? You are altogether too poetical for me, my dear," said Caesar, laughing artificially.

"Perhaps you can understand this, then," said Servilia, angered. "When I first knew you, you were in flight, proscribed for having resisted the will of Sulla. You did not admire despots then."

"I was a lad then, and knew nothing of the world," said Caesar shortly. "You speak as though I were a tyrant; I am the greatest benefactor Rome has known."

"I am not clever enough to answer that, Caius Caesar," said Servilia with cold formality, "but there are others who may."

"That reminds me," said Caesar, jerking up his head. "Brutus. Antony is always telling me that Brutus is plotting against me, with Cassius."

"Antony!" exclaimed Servilia with contempt.

"Very true," said Caesar, nodding. He reflected a moment, then smiled. "I think Brutus will wait for this skin," he observed comfortably, patting his chest.

Servilia sighed and was silent.

An hour later Caesar left for the City, to be present at the ceremony of the Lupercalia.

This ceremony, celebrated in mid-February from the oldest times, originally a purification of shepherds, consisted of a sacrifice of young dogs and goats in that ancient grotto on the Palatine said to be the scene of the wolf's nourishing of the founders of Rome. The priests of the Luperci—Caesar had made Antony one and attached public emoluments to the position; for Antony was always up to the ears in debt and one had to find money for him continually—touched the forehead of two youths of noble birth with the animals' blood, then wiped off the stain with wool dipped in milk, at which the youths broke into a loud shout of laughter. It was not this part of the ceremony to which Servilia objected, but the subsequent proceedings; for the Luperci, having feasted on goatsflesh and wine, clad themselves in shreds of goatskin

taken from the slaughtered animals, and ran about the City half naked, smiting everyone they met with thongs of the same skin. The touch of the thongs was supposed to confer fertility, and opportunities for robust jokes were thus very numerous. The thought of Antony performing these duties was amusing or revolting, according to one's view of the duties, of Antony, and of religion in general; a large crowd gathered along the route to the Palatine seemed to share Caesar's view rather than Servilia's.

Caesar, in his purple robe and laurel wreath, sat in his golden chair on the Rostra in the Forum, where the ceremony was to terminate. His piercing grey eyes roved incessantly amongst the crowd, studying the expression on the jostling faces; his lower jaw quivered in sudden convulsive movements; he was excited, as when going into battle. It seemed a long time before the Luperci appeared, and mentally Caesar berated Antony: the fool, to delay so long! The crowd will be gone—it is thinning already. Suddenly there was a great access of numbers, however, as those who had been lining the streets all poured into the Forum; Caesar now recollected that he had bidden Antony wait for this very thing, and his frown faded. Antony now came running up, his strong broad body looking very well, thought Caesar with pleasure, in the scanty shreds of goatskin; he wore a hearty grin which showed his strong white teeth, and was using his thong with gusto. A roar of laughter went up from the crowd as he passed, and it was evident that he pleased them. Caesar smiled too, and put up his hand to hide the trembling of his jaw. "Now!" he thought.

Antony sprang up the steps to the Rostra, and drawing a golden crown with a flourish from his scanty furs, he waved it in the air to focus the huge crowd's attention, and made to lay it on Caesar's head.

Caesar listened intently. Some little applause sounded as the crowd realised Antony's intention, but it was thin, and too plainly from one quarter only; Caesar therefore shook

his head and waved Antony mildly away. At this the applause thundered. Caesar managed a smile.

"The Roman people have commanded me to offer you the crown," shouted Antony, approaching the diadem again to Caesar's head.

To Caesar's sensitive ear the remark sounded too obviously learned by heart and recited, and the applause was thinner even than before. He bit his lip, and waved Antony off again, this time much more emphatically. Antony, somewhat perplexed but loyal to his orders, advanced the crown again.

"Take it away, you fool!" screamed Caesar, as an angry shout of disapproval broke from the crowd. Antony, disconcerted, backed; Caesar, recovering his control by a severe effort, rose with dignity, and, smiling one of his most affable smiles, held up his hand for silence.

"There is no king in Rome save Jupiter," he cried in a shrill mincing tone. "Take the crown to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol." A great roar of applause went up from the crowd at this, and Caesar went on eagerly: "It shall be entered in the Annals of the City that Marcus Antonius the consul, by command of the people, offered the kingdom to Caius Caesar, perpetual Dictator, and Caesar refused to accept it."

The crowd looked a little blank at this, and clapped half-heartedly, for they had not commanded Antony in that sense, nor did they believe that anyone save Caesar himself had done so. For where did Antony get that crown from, after all? He must have brought it with him from his house—Pompey's house, too, by Hercules, which Antony had bought up cheap at a forced spear-head auction; a shameful thing and Caesar ought never to have allowed it—well, he must have brought it from home, for you don't pick crowns up in the Forum every day—no, nor in goatskins neither—in a word, the whole thing was planned beforehand—an owl could see it in daylight, as that ragged old mendicant Flora

shouted viciously. Caesar, perceiving that he had made a mistake, hastened to retrieve it; smiling brilliantly, he waved Antony off to the Sacred Way, then turning towards the temple of Jupiter, extended both hands as if presenting Antony and his gift to the god. The gesture was effective, but not perhaps quite convincing from Caesar, and the crowd applauded dutifully but without enthusiasm. They dispersed more silently than was their custom; many felt uneasy, but thought their uneasiness too dangerous to communicate.

Caesar immediately returned to Servilia in the country. The news of the awkward scene in the Forum preceded him, and everyone in the villa, including Servilia, felt a nervous anxiety as to the state of his temper as a result. When he arrived, their worst forebodings seemed justified, for an angry flush lay on his cheekbones, making his thin face more haggard by contrast, his jaw quivered, and he said not a word, while his escort looked subdued and unhappy. After an hour in the fine marble baths which had been added to the villa for his special use, however, he came down to dinner in a very handsome new tunic and a lively mood; his jokes set the (only too willing) table in a roar, and the whole villa, with its enormous staff (necessitated by Caesar's innumerable attendants and hangers-on), bubbled with relief in consequence. It seemed to Servilia, who knew his moods so well, that his gaiety was not factitious but genuine, based on some real change of heart; she dared not seriously allow herself to hope, but could not forbear imagining for a moment what life would be like if he had really decided to restore the Republic to Rome. Joy filled her whole being at the mere notion; her eyes glowed, she smiled; for the first time since Caesar crossed the Rubicon she felt able to take pleasure in her graceful grey gown, her clear grey eyes, the cloud of her greying but still abundant and beautiful hair. Caesar responded to her mood; when they were alone he spoke to her with a tender teasing courtesy, as of old.

"Why are you so happy to-night, Caius?" asked Servilia softly.

Caesar gave an artificial sigh, which his sparkling eyes belied.

"I can see I shall be obliged to go to Parthia," he said.

"Why is there suddenly all this talk of Parthia?" said Servilia, disturbed. "For the past nine years there has been little mention of Parthia; now suddenly it is all over Rome."

"Don't you know, my dear," said Caesar in mock reproof, "that the Romans suffered a fearful defeat at Carrhae? A stain on the Roman arms which must be washed out by Parthian blood!"

"But Crassus was cursed before leaving Rome for threatening Parthia, a friendly country which had done Rome no wrong!" cried Servilia. "The gods were against him; Crassus had what he deserved. Why should you repeat his crime?"

"When I fight, all Rome loves me," explained Caesar in a sombre tone. "When I stay at home, they refuse me the crown. I believe," he added with a sudden gleeful sparkle, "that the Sibylline oracle, if consulted, will declare that Parthia can only be conquered by a king. Naturally I have arranged to consult it."

There was a silence.

Servilia rose and threw open one leaf of the door.

"Why do that?" demanded Caesar.

"The room is hot—the lamp smells—the air chokes me," said Servilia faintly.

Towards the end of the month the oracle, consulted by Antony in his capacity as augur, duly revealed that Parthia could not be conquered by Romans unless they were commanded by a king. Caesar affected to take no notice of this Sibylline utterance; he shrugged his shoulders when it was mentioned and offered no opinion on its validity. The

preparations for the expedition were pushed on rapidly, however, and it was plain that Caesar meant to command it himself. A motion was brought before the Senate to allow him to call himself king in every place in the Roman dominions save only Italy ; Antony as consul insisted on allotting a day for the discussion of this proposal, and it was put on the agenda for the Ides of March.

The position of all those of senatorial rank who disapproved the despotism of Caesar thus became awkward, and that of Brutus and Cassius extremely so ; for in the debate on the proposed decree all senators would be asked for their opinion, and the praetors for an early one. To refuse an opinion, or to speak with hostility, on such a motion, seemed highly dangerous ; there was a general suspicion that the clemency of Caesar was wearing a little thin, and in any case neither Brutus nor Cassius wished to owe their lives to Caesar a second time. As a result, several large dinner-parties for men only were held in the house of Brutus, the guests afterwards adjourning to the library for conversation—it was not, as Cassius pointed out with an air of satisfaction, the first time the house had been used as the headquarters of a conspiracy—and on the night before the discussion was due in the Senate, there was yet another gathering.

The low murmur of voices from the Parthenon maddened Porcia, to whom Brutus had revealed nothing of what was going on. That he was involved in some serious plot she guessed, from his preoccupied air, his many visitors, the sudden changes from dreaming calm to storm and high resolve which played across his face. The nature of the plot she also guessed, and approved with all her heart ; but that she should be placed on the level of a kitten like Tertia, and allowed to take no part—she who cared only for the Republic, who was Cato's daughter, who had married Brutus, as she told herself, to turn him from Caesar to his duty—it was intolerable ! With growing impatience, she sent slaves

three times to seek her husband. The first returned to her as she lay tossing on her bed with the message that there were guards at the library door and he had been refused admittance—there were thirty or forty guests, he thought, within. The second, sent an hour later, told her that the guests had all gone save Cassius, with whom the master was in close and secret conversation. The man spoke nervously, with wandering eyes; it was clear to Porcia that the whole household suspected something was afoot, perhaps even knew more of it than she did. She waited another hour, then, as Brutus did not yet come to her, she commanded old Sarpedon to be routed from his bed, and bade him go in to his master in the library whoever else were present, and tell him Porcia was ill. It was true enough; her healthy cheek was pale, her eyes glittered, her body throbbed with fever.

This last message brought Brutus at once, as she had known it would; he came in with an anxious step, crossed quickly to her side, and without speaking laid his hand on her forehead. He exclaimed at its burning warmth, and turned to call a slave to fetch the physician; Porcia, however, seized his arm to detain him. He looked at her in question. Porcia threw back her coverings.

“Look!” she whispered.

Her firm rosy thigh was marred by a jagged wound as long as a finger; the edges were black with dried blood, the surrounding flesh had an inflamed and angry appearance. Brutus exclaimed in horror, and bending over the wound, which he touched with delicate fingers, poured out questions as to how and when the injury had been received.

“I inflicted it myself—this morning,” whispered Porcia. “With my scissors. I told no one of it till now when I tell you.”

“But why? Why?” cried the perplexed Brutus. “It is dangerous—it has given you fever.” As a sudden possible answer to his question suddenly occurred to him, he turned her face up to his so that he might look into her eyes, and

asked in a sombre tone: "Did you wish to destroy yourself? Are you not happy as my wife?"

"I should be happy if you treated me as a wife and not a toy," replied Porcia with passion, drawing him down to her side. "You are planning some great action, you are in trouble, perhaps in danger, yet you tell me nothing of what is going on. Am I a plaything, then, to be kept to amuse your lighter hours? Am I not Cato's daughter?"

"What I am planning involves other men's lives," said Brutus sternly. "It is not right to speak of it even to my nearest friend, even to my wife."

"Do you think other men keep the secret so close?" cried Porcia.

"If not, it may go ill with all of us," replied Brutus. He had put his arm about his wife's beautiful strong shoulders, but his face was dreaming and preoccupied, and he did not look at her.

"You think I cannot keep a secret. You are wrong," said Porcia. "I stabbed myself to prove you so. I have been in pain, in agony all day."

"Porcia!" cried Brutus in distress.

"Yet I told no one," continued Porcia firmly, "and received your guests for you with calm cheerfulness to-night. Which of your colleagues in this plan of yours could do as much? You plan for the good of the Republic, and hide it from Cato's daughter. Why?"

"Listen, then," said Brutus, deeply moved. He put his lips to his wife's ear and murmured: "To-morrow evening you may wear a coloured robe."

Porcia started, and fixed her eyes on his in fearful joy. "Do you mean?" she whispered.

Brutus nodded.

"Whose hand is to strike the blow?" whispered Porcia.

"All will strike," said Brutus.

"Are there many of you?"

"Some fifty," said Brutus. "The Senate is convened

to-morrow in Pompey's theatre," he added in a louder tone.

"It is right that it should be thus," murmured Porcia, her dark eyes gleaming. "Very right. In Pompey's theatre, and by the hand of the son-in-law of Cato."

"What does that matter?" said Brutus sternly. "I have loved Caesar and admired him; I strike reluctantly, but strongly, as the only way to save Rome."

"Marcus, I am so proud of you!" murmured Porcia; she turned to him and pressed a deep kiss in the hollow of his arm.

"I am not very proud of myself," returned Brutus. "We should have acted sooner—we should not have let it come to this."

"But now you must strike hard, to save Rome!" urged Porcia fondly.

Brutus sighed, and murmured: "Yes, now we must strike hard, to save Rome."

Porcia threw her arms about him and kissed him passionately on the lips.

Next morning very early, before the dawn, Porcia felt her husband stirring at her side.

"Where are you going, Marcus?" she whispered.

He did not answer, but rose, and without calling slaves, lit a second lamp and swiftly dressed himself. He put on his toga and purple-striped tunic, as though for a visit of ceremony, or the Senate.

"Where are you going, Marcus?" whispered Porcia again.

Brutus came to her side and bent over her; the loose folds at his breast drooped forward, and Porcia caught the gleam of bronze. "Ah!" she gasped.

"I go to the temple of Jupiter, to purify myself and commend my act to the gods," said Brutus gravely. "Tertia and her children will come to you shortly. If anything untoward should happen, you must go at once to my mother in the country."

"Your mother !" exclaimed Porcia, revolted. She raised herself on her strong white elbow, and drew his toga up on his shoulder, mechanically.

"Remember what I say," went on Brutus quietly, disregarding her interruption. "Stay within the house—keep Tertia with you—do not stir when you hear shouting—if anything untoward occurs, go to my mother at once. These are my commands to my wife, and I expect them to be obeyed. Think of them when I am gone," he added, seeing the frown of perplexity on her smooth warm brow ; " Meanwhile, bid me farewell."

He took her in his arms and kissed her with passion, burying his face in the lovely angle between neck and shoulder, in the warm crook of her beautifully rounded arm. Porcia stroked his dark tumbled hair without particularly meaning the caress ; she was surprised by the masterful strength of his embrace no less than by his commanding words. He released her at last, stood for a moment looking down at her, then throwing the end of his toga more firmly over his shoulder, strode from the room. He has woken from his dreams at last, thought Porcia, as she noted his erect carriage, his quick step, the tense resolution of lip and nostril.

For herself, she was tired ; she lay back thankfully on her pillows with her hands above her head. In this position her thigh pained her. She summoned her slaves and sent for Brutus' physician, who re-dressed her wound with soothing herbs. The release from pain was delicious, and she lay still, enjoying it ; the wind which had howled round the house all night had dropped with the coming of the dawn, and that too seemed a release ; Porcia drowsed, warm and content, and presently slept.

She was woken by the arrival of Tertia, which made a stir below. Her maid told her somewhat pointedly that the three children of Cassius had accompanied their mother ; it was evident that the household was very uneasy this morning, suspecting that something unusual was going on.

Porcia hastened to dress and greet her sister-in-law. Tertia's mild liquid eyes wore a look of perplexity, as though Cassius had hurried her off without telling her why.

"Shall we walk in the gardens a little?" suggested Porcia. "We shall hear better, in the open, what goes on in the streets."

Tertia's mild eyes widened, but she had been taught by the quick temper of her husband to ask questions sparingly and with discretion, so it was not till the two women were walking alone beside the river, with the children chasing each other round the flower-beds, that she ventured timidly:

"What do you expect to hear?"

Porcia's heart swelled with pride—Cassius, then, had concealed from his wife what Brutus had told to her.

"Don't you know," she exclaimed impulsively: "that they mean to kill Caesar to-day?"

"What?" screamed Tertia. She stood still as if turned to stone, and stared at her sister-in-law wildly, her eyes black in her white face.

"Hush! Don't let the children hear you!" said Porcia, laying a soothing hand on her arm.

"But who? Who is going to——" cried Tertia.

"Your husband and mine," said Porcia with pride.

"What? And you've let them go? You wicked woman! You wicked woman!" cried Tertia wildly.

"Your husband will not thank you for so much concern for his enemy," said Porcia coldly, trying to draw her sister-in-law into the little summer-house that faced the Tiber.

"Concern for Caesar!" cried Tertia wildly, shaking off her hand. "Do you suppose I care for Caesar beside my husband! They have gone to their death!"

"Nonsense!" said Porcia firmly. "There are fifty, all pledged to slay the tyrant."

"They will be discovered—they will be cut down," panted Tertia.

FFF

"Caesar keeps no bodyguard," replied Porcia, beginning nevertheless to be troubled by her sister-in-law's words.

"They will be torn in pieces by the crowd!" screamed Tertia, now quite beyond control. "O, my poor fatherless children!" She rushed to the children with arms outstretched; alarmed by their mother's weeping they threw themselves on her breast and joined their tears to hers.

"Really, Tertia!" expostulated Porcia, unable to avoid smiling at the ludicrous picture they made, though vexed by their foolishness. "Is it a group of Niobe and her children you are representing?"

"You fool!" exclaimed Tertia with violent emphasis, raising her hand as if to strike her: "Don't you understand you will never see Marcus alive again?"

"Absurd," began Porcia, nevertheless paling—when suddenly, from the direction of the Forum, there arose a loud shouting, which swelled into a steady roar.

The two women stared at each other in silence, white as snow, their faces contorted masks of anguish.

"It is Caesar leaving the Regia to go to the Senate," whispered Tertia.

"O Jupiter, Jupiter!" screamed Porcia suddenly. "I have sent him to his death! He would never have joined a conspiracy but for me! O, what shall I do, what shall I do—if anything untoward occurs, he said—he meant his death. O, Tertia, what shall we do? We must prevent them, we must send a message—I will send to him to say I am ill—Felix! Auctus!" she screamed, clapping her hands to bring the slaves. "I will send to say I am ill, Tertia," she panted, turning to her sister-in-law with a pleading air. "I will send to say I am ill."

"That won't bring my brother now," said Tertia sadly. "You don't know him, though you are his wife, if you think it will."

"I know him well enough," said Porcia, weeping. "He is

noble, noble—and I have despised him for his dreams.”

The slaves, who had come running out at Porcia’s shrill summons, seeing their mistress and her guest pale and distraught, with the children trembling in their arms, eyed them all aghast.

“My little Lucius almost fell into the river,” lied Tertia, seeing her sister-in-law at a loss for a concealing word.

“Send Sarpedon here,” broke in Porcia sharply.

The slaves bowed and retired, looking back, however, at the group by the river curiously.

“Sarpedon was my father’s tutor,” panted Porcia. “We will send him—Brutus will pay heed to him because he was my father’s tutor.”

Tertia shook her head. “How can they turn back now, when they have pledged their word?” she said. “Our only hope is to send word to Caesar.”

“Caesar!” exclaimed Porcia, and recoiled.

“Yes—we will write a letter saying there is danger for him in the Senate,” urged Tertia, hurrying her towards the house. “We will send Sarpedon.”

“Yes, yes!” cried Porcia hopefully. “He is an old man—he will be gently treated by the crowd.”

They ran into the library. Sarpedon, who had just received Porcia’s summons, was rising slowly, grumbling a little about his old bones, from his writing table.

“We’ll send him down in a litter—quick! Quick!” cried Porcia, forcing her sister-in-law into the slave’s chair. “Here are tablets, here is a stilus. Write quickly, write!”

“What s-s-s-shall I write?” stammered Tertia, trembling.

Another heavy roar, nearer than the last, told them that Caesar was crossing the Forum. Porcia put her hands to her head.

“Write: *Caius, there is fearful danger for you in the Senate; if you love me, do not go,*” she dictated.

Tertia looked up, astonished ; Cato's daughter bent to her ear.

"Sign it with your mother's name," she whispered.

Caesar was late in going to the Senate this morning ; indeed it was doubtful at one time whether he would go at all. He had spent an atrocious night, worse than any he remembered, and he was rather afraid he had called out in his sleep, for the slaves at his door looked concerned and anxious when he rose, and Calpurnia had come rushing in with her hair unbound to urge him not to leave his bed.

"Rest, darling !" she had pleaded.

The excess of feeling in her speech always irritated Caesar, though he knew it sprang from a good heart, and in the past had usually tried to make a suitable response. This morning it had the effect of making him rise promptly, though he felt far from well, and announce his intention of going to the Senate. Calpurnia thereupon changed her tactics and announced that the omens were unfavourable.

"O, nonsense !" said Caesar irritably. "Am I to stay at home because a chicken has no heart ?"

Calpurnia, who was very religious, opened wide eyes at this and prepared to be horrified.

"That was a joke, my dear," explained Caesar hastily.

At this Calpurnia looked more bewildered than before. Her eyes and her mouth were so wide and so stupid that Caesar felt an almost irresistible desire to slap them ; the effort to control his temper—for well-bred Romans should not slap their wives ; the resulting scandal would be bad for his popularity—made his jaw quiver and the blood rush to his head, and he began to feel almost ill, and certainly unable to endure any more fools, such as he would undoubtedly have to meet in the Senate.

"Perhaps I will remain at home after all," he said wearily.

Calpurnia, delighted with this victory—which she attributed entirely, as Caesar reflected with a sardonic smile, to the heartless chicken—dismissed all his morning callers and sent off an official messenger at once to the theatre of Pompey. As a result there presently came a senator, a former officer of high rank in Caesar's army, to request an interview with the Dictator at once on urgent business. Caesar, ashamed of being found in bed, unshaven, at this time, by a man who knew him in the days when nothing tired him, sprang up, and kept his caller waiting less than half an hour. The soldier with a long face began a ceremonious speech regretting Caesar's absence from the Senate that day; Caesar interrupted him impatiently.

"You did not speak so tediously in Gaul," he said.

A curious look flashed across the man's face, and he seemed to hesitate. Caesar observed the look and the hesitation, but had no guide to their meaning, and thought he had perhaps been unduly abrupt to a former fellow-soldier.

"Speak as you like—Marseilles gave you the right," he said, referring to a spectacular siege in which this officer had distinguished himself.

It did not strike him that the speech was one from on high to a valued inferior, or that the inferior might think his own victories equal to Caesar's and resent his subordinate position. But so this commander felt it, and the sudden repentance he had felt towards Caesar when reminded of their comradeship in Gaul disappeared. His face hardened, he hesitated no longer; he said, with apparent bluntness but a real subtlety taught him by Cassius, that Caesar's absence would be very injurious to his interests in the Senate. If he would not trouble to come down when the Parthian arrangements were to be discussed, he could hardly expect the Senate to be eager to grant him what he wanted—the Senate had its dignity to consider, after all.

"I have heard of the Senate's dignity all my life, but never yet been harmed by it," said Caesar impatiently. The

soldier's face was strange again, he noticed, and he added :
" However, I will come."

In spite of all this delay there was still a large crowd of citizens of the poorer sort outside the Regia, which cheered its favourite as he emerged. There was the usual shouting, the usual pressing round him—his lictors had standing orders to clear the way as gently as they could—the usual basketful of petitions, the usual necessity for affable smiles, an occasional lively repartee and a few well-timed salutes. Progress across the crowded Forum was slow, and Caesar began to frown—it was almost worse to keep the Senate waiting than to stay away altogether. Moreover the day was cold and sunless, and his thin blood suffered.

" Make way, good friends, make way ! " he shrilled impatiently.

" Read this, Caesar, read this ! " quavered an old voice to his right.

Immediately all the other petitioners in the vicinity shouted : " Read this too, Caesar ! Caesar, read mine ! " A score of hands held out tablets and letters, which the slave who attended him for the purpose received.

" I will read all presently, fellow-citizens," cried Caesar shrilly, almost beside himself with impatience. " Meanwhile let me pass—the Senate waits."

" Read this now, Caesar, read this now ! " wailed Sarpèdon, extending Tertia's note in a trembling hand. Porcia, weeping and distracted, had cried to him : " My husband's life depends on your getting this read by Caesar " ; and the faithful old man avoided the hand stretched out by the slave, and waved the tablet tremulously about in front of Caesar to attract his attention, pushing his way along in the crowd beside him as well as he could, but gradually losing ground. Caesar, who was busy composing his speech to the Senate, did not observe him ; but the crowd took pity on the old man's white hair and tottering footsteps, and jostled each other to let him pass.

"I am a scholar—I am a soothsayer—I have news of importance to foretell," wailed Sarpedon pitifully. "Read this now!"

"You're a very old fellow to be out in such a crowd," said a voice severely. "Give it to the slave, grandpa!" cried another. "Take it, Caesar!" begged a third. "Eyes front!" shouted an old centurion suddenly, in stentorian tones.

At the sound of the familiar army command Caesar started and came to a sense of his surroundings; he smiled and took the tablet, which he politely retained for a few moments in his hand. Sarpedon fell back, relieved and exhausted, and the procession passed on its way. As soon as it had turned the corner the slave beside Caesar respectfully recovered the tablet from his master's hand, and placed it with the others in the basket.

Antony was standing on the fine marble steps of the theatre of Pompey to welcome Caesar. His strong body and military carriage always looked odd in a toga, but at least to-day, thought Caesar with relief, his toga was clean, he hadn't been wine-sick over it as on one recent deplorable (and very public) occasion. It was rather depressing, reflected Caesar, suddenly struck by the fact, that all his devoted adherents, though extremely able in their own line, somehow lacked the talent for living decent respectable lives. Antony now would be more useful in Parthia than in Rome—but if he took Antony, whom could he trust to leave in charge of Rome? If Octavius were a little older now! But Octavius was only eighteen, and in any case he was far away from Rome just now, learning to be a man, in Apollonia. Caesar sighed; and wished, as he climbed painfully, that Pompey had not been quite so lavish with his marble steps.

After the formal greeting—which again Antony made far too military—someone drew Antony aside and began to talk to him very earnestly; Caesar frowned a little, but went on. He entered the assembly hall, with its fine statue of Pompey;

at the far end the attendants of the building were just placing his gilded chair. A group of senators, amongst whom were Cassius and Brutus, thronged him closely—too closely, thought Caesar irritably; it was all very well for the poorer citizens in the street to crowd him, but one expected better behaviour in the Senate. A man, whose brother was in exile, halted in front of him, and, moistening his lips nervously, began a plea for his recall.

“I will consider the matter another time,” said Caesar.

“O, consider it now, Caesar!” urged the senator. There seemed a kind of mock solemnity in his tone which Caesar found impertinent.

“Your importunity is unseasonable, Tillius Cimber,” he said stiffly.

“O, Caesar!” began Cimber again.

Caesar frowned, and looked about for someone to relieve him of this tiresome fellow. Brutus was on the fringe of the group, and Caesar gave him a glance and a slight movement of the head to draw him nearer. He looked very pale—“as well he might,” thought Caesar impatiently, “married to Cato’s daughter.”

At this moment Cassius, with an avenging look up at Pompey’s statue, which towered above them, dropped the end of his toga from his shoulder. It was the prearranged signal. Cimber sprang forward and with both hands tore down the toga from Caesar’s neck; at the same moment a knife was plunged into the base of his throat.

“Help! Help!” screamed Caesar, throwing up his arms and defending himself vigorously. “Help! Antony! To me!”

He saw all about him swords, naked arms, faces contorted with murderous rage; the conspirators were so eager to kill that many of their blows glanced off his body, some even wounding their own friends.

“If I had my sword,” thought Caesar with exasperation: “I’d soon dispose of these civilians!” Even as he thought

thus the soldier Cassius, his lips curled back from his yellow teeth in a snarl of rage, struck him a strong well placed blow in the side; blood poured from the wound, Caesar staggered and began for the first time to feel anxious for his life. "Help! Antony!" he repeated shrilly, and tried to turn towards the doors. The face of Brutus, with the fine dark eyes and the well loved curve of throat and lip, now suddenly loomed large before him. "Ah!" gasped Caesar thankfully. "There you are!" Brutus, pale as death, his fine eyes glittering, slowly raised his right hand, in which gleamed a sword. "What, you too!" cried Caesar. "No! Why should you? No, no!"

"Yes!" whispered Brutus, and stabbed him to the heart.

And in the moment of time while the blade descended, Caesar's mind, fired by pain, cleared in a flash to its old keenness, and he understood the blow's cause. A series of hateful pictures flew through his mind: he saw himself in Bithynia, yielding honour to advantage, himself throwing Servilia's note to Cato in the Senate, himself tempting Pompey with Julia, pricking on Crassus with jealousy's spur; he heard himself ordering *Strike at the face*, and saw an Egyptian eunuch offering him Pompey's withered head. He saw himself bribing, corrupting, manœuvring, fighting, seizing men's freedom in order to make them free. He struggled to remember all the good things he had done for Rome—Gaul, the army, the taxes, the courts—but when all was said and done, the result of his life was to force his fellow Romans to be either murderers or slaves. He understood all Servilia's silences now, all in his life and hers that was too piteous, too tragic, for her to say. He had used her as he had used Rome, taking by force what was only of value when it was freely offered. He understood now his feeling of guilt since he became Dictator, his incapacity to enjoy; he was wrong, wrong, all wrong! "I have made Brutus into a murderer," thought Caesar with unutterable sadness, loving the lad

even as he raised his arm to strike: "I have done good things in a most evil way."

The blow fell.

Caesar gasped, and with a gesture of resignation drew his toga tightly about him so that he might lie in decency, and muffled his face in its purple folds. The conspirators, seeing their quarry weakening to his end, shouted in triumph and pressed on him fiercely. He staggered forward several steps, his head bowed, his shoulders drooping more and more beneath the rain of blows; and at last fell heavily on the statue's marble base, quivered and lay still.

Caesar was dead.


"Liberty lives once more!" shouted Brutus hoarsely, waving his blood-stained sword.

A riot followed. Rome took sides. Antony fled to his house, Brutus would not allow him to be pursued. The conspirators retreated to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline in face of the fury of part of the mob. Thither Cicero sent them a flight of excited congratulatory letters, and their following grew through the day, for the character of Brutus gave doubters pause—if Brutus had struck Caesar down, they thought, Caesar must have been a tyrant indeed. At length Antony sent a child of his to Brutus as a hostage, and the conspirators ventured to descend. Each side assured the other that they meant no harm, and only wished to serve the State; quiet was restored, Antony dined with Cassius—who in spite of this did not trust him and would much rather have murdered him—and others of Caesar's friends were the guests of Brutus. Sarpedon having perished in the riot, his old heart too frail to stand such turbulence, Tertia and Porcia were able to forget their ill-fated letter. Indeed Porcia really forgot it; in brilliant white, her dark eyes gleaming, a smile of happy pride on her handsome face, she threw herself into Brutus' arms and told him in an ecstasy that she

loved him. Brutus, pale and silent, put her quietly aside.

All this time the body of Caesar lay as it had fallen at the foot of his marble rival; none dared be seen approaching it, for fear of being suspected of sympathy towards the man whom everyone now agreed to call a tyrant. At last when night fell three slaves of his household—all who could be persuaded to go—crept into the theatre and carried the body home in a litter; as they were only three the litter swung unevenly, and one of Caesar's arms dangled over the side.

“Now for the first time,” murmured Servilia, prostrate before the altar-hearth in her cold little mountain farm: “I understand the true meaning of war. For every man who falls, someone grieves as I grieve now for Caesar.”



DEAD MEN DO NOT DIE

“A ROMAN CITIZEN—to death—is given,” intoned the public crier from the steps of the Regia: “His obsequies—for those whom it pleases—it is now time to attend. This citizen—from his home—is—now—borne!”

As the words of the ancient formula died on the spring air, bright with sunshine, the long procession moved off slowly towards the Forum. First came the lines of trumpeters and horn-blowers, then the women wailing and chanting, then the images of Caesar's ancestors, worn by actors, dressed in the robes of the offices those ancestors had held. These should have been followed by the trophies of Caesar's exploits in war, but the Senate had forbidden their exhibition—Antony gnashed his teeth with rage at the thought—as dangerous to the public peace. Behind the ancestral images, therefore, followed Caesar's thirty-six lictors, with fasces lowered—there had been an argument also about the number to be allowed of these, but Antony's face had become so congested with rage at the suggestion of curtailing them that this minor point had been hastily conceded. Then came the torch-bearers; then the bier with its purple covering, carefully arranged to show Caesar's waxen face without exposing any of his wounds. Antony's heart nearly cracked with pain and grief every time he saw it, and since he and Caesar's father-in-law walked directly behind the bier, as the deceased man's nearest male relatives—Octavius being in Apollonia—his anger mounted till it almost choked him, and he could scarcely forbear from shouting wild words aloud in the street. In his excitement his stride quickened, and he

constantly found himself out of line with Calpurnia's father, who—bald save for a silvery fringe, stooping and crafty—walked very decorously, eyes decently cast down. In spite of this, however, he managed to cast sly glances from time to time at the slave who walked beside him, respectfully carrying the huge scroll which was Caesar's will. Behind them came a long train of senators in mourning—"Dissimulators!" thought Antony, grinding his teeth. He tripped over his own toga, felt stifled by the mourning folds over his head, longed to have his arms free save for the thick golden bracelets he affected, longed for his military cloak and arms, his sword. The clangour of the trumpets, the wailing of the women, the horrid yellow flame of torches in daylight, the glimpses of Caesar's dead face, excited him almost to the pitch of madness.

"Fools!" thought Antony in a fury, as the procession entered the Forum and slowly grouped itself about the Rostra for the funeral oration. "Fools! Do they imagine I've forgotten Caesar? Do they imagine I love the men who murdered him? Do they think I'm content to slip down into nothing after being Caesar's right hand? Fools! Fools! I can dissimulate as well as they! Fools!"

The bier was carried slowly up the steps, and set down ceremoniously on the Rostra. Antony and Caesar's father-in-law followed, and in a thin but clear voice the latter read out those items of Caesar's will which concerned the people of Rome. The huge crowd listened attentively, at first in silence, but later with murmurs of applause, since Caesar had left them money, and gardens, with a liberality exceeding any hitherto known. Some of the Optimates, who were attending in order to place a public seal on the political truce concluded by the parties, frowned a little, and a message was passed along to Antony, reminding him of his promise to make his oration short and decorous. Antony bowed his head in pretended acquiescence, thinking to himself the while, savagely:

“ Fools ! ”

The moment had come ; he stepped forward, threw back his toga, and with a swift strong movement plucked the purple covering from Caesar's bier. Although he did this from pure artifice, to play on the feelings of the people, he felt a shock of horror stab him as he saw again the ghastly spectacle of the five and twenty wounds piercing the helpless body ; tears sprang into his eyes, he shuddered and stepped back. At this an uneasy murmur rose and fell and rose again amid the crowd. A savage delight surged into Antony's heart as he heard it. “ Fools ! ” he thought, glancing round at the circle of uncomfortable Optimates with a triumphant smile. He sprang forward. He was not an accomplished or experienced speaker, and had caused a set oration to be written for him, which he had then learned word by word. But now he threw it aside ; all he had to do, he knew, was to stand there and shout at the top of his voice his own feelings about the murder of Caesar.

“ Fellow-Romans ! ” he thundered. “ The greatest general Rome has ever known is slain by the daggers of the men he trusted . . . ”

A few days later, in a well-furnished room in Apollonia, a young man of nineteen was reading to his friend, who lay in bed. A brazier filled with glowing charcoal heated the room beyond what was necessary for the time of year, and the reader had thrown aside his toga and sat in his tunic. Octavius, however, who lay on his back, propped up by pillows, his small hands clasped snugly across his stomach, had three coverlets over him and a woollen cloak round his shoulders ; he was suffering from a cold. The parchment from which his friend Agrippa read was embellished with curious geometrical designs ; it was a horoscope, just arrived from the astrologer whom the lads had consulted the day before, and promised Octavius a remarkable destiny, in

highly flattering terms. From time to time Agrippa's voice quickened with interest or soared into incredulity, but his friend's face did not change its customary smooth and serene expression.

"He certainly promises well," concluded Agrippa with a laugh, throwing the document carelessly on the bed. "It's astonishing how these fellows find so much to say."

"Yes," agreed Octavius mildly.

Something in his tone seemed to show, however, that he did not really agree, but attached more importance to the horoscope than his companion; and this became certain when he stretched out his arm and secured the scroll, which threatened to fall to the floor. Agrippa felt a trifle disconcerted, remembered uncomfortably the other superstitions of Octavius—the strip of sealskin he carried as a protection against lightning, his fear of putting on the left shoe before the right, his belief that rain at the beginning of a journey was a good omen—and felt that his own slighting allusion to the horoscope had been lacking in urbanity. To cover his lapse, he hastily enquired whether he should continue the reading of the Greek comedy which the arrival of the horoscope had interrupted. The reply of Octavius was delayed by a sneeze, and just at that moment there came a knocking at the doors. On Agrippa opening, he was told by a slave that a messenger had arrived with news for the young master, from Rome.

"Let him in," said Octavius sniffing.

The messenger, admitted, proved to be no mere ordinary letter-carrier, but a trusted elderly freedman, often employed in important business affairs by Octavius' family. The man was barely in the room before he cried out that he had serious news, important news, but having said so far, seemed unable to go any further, and stood hesitating, stammering formal greetings, plucking at the edge of his gown.

"If you dread to announce that my great-uncle has been murdered," said Octavius in his peculiar sweet tones,

"pray do not hesitate. We know it already—we heard it last night." The man's face brightened, to fall again as Octavius drawled: "Surely you have delayed on the way hither?"

"No, sir," the freedman defended himself earnestly: "Believe me, it is not so. Your relatives did not send me immediately after the—event; they waited to see how the matter would turn."

"And how did it turn?" enquired Octavius sweetly.

"Both well and ill—may the gods avert the omen!" said the freedman.

The others repeated the pious words in the customary mumble, then Octavius, having sneezed, said suavely:

"Pray go on."

"At a meeting of the Senate, three days after Caius Caesar's death, summoned by Marcus Antonius in the temple of Tellus," began the freedman.

"Near Antony's house—so he was afraid of the street crowds," commented Octavius. "Rome, then, sided with the murderers?"

"At first, yes," said the freedman apologetically. "At this meeting of the Senate, however, three important decrees were passed. First, an amnesty to be proclaimed."

"No prosecution of the murderers!" exclaimed Agrippa, aghast.

Octavius sucked his lip and looked at his coverlet.

"Second," continued the freedman rapidly—from his manner the two young men judged that the most important of his news was to come at the last—"all the acts of the late Dictator to be confirmed."

"What?" exclaimed Agrippa, favourably surprised.

"They would all be out of office, else," drawled Octavius, still looking down. "None of the elections held under my great-uncle would be valid, you see."

"Third, the illustrious Caius Caesar to have a public funeral, and his father-in-law publicly to read his will."

Octavius raised his eyes.

"It was these last decrees," continued the freedman, "which caused Rome to return to its love of Caesar and its hate for his murderers. The will is very generous to the people—Caesar's gardens across the Tiber are given to Rome for ever, and a sum of a hundred and twenty sesterces to every citizen. Marcus Antonius made a fine oration at the funeral, dwelling on Caesar's victories in Gaul and his constant liberality to Rome."

"What else did they expect?" murmured Octavius. "Did they expect a man who wielded supreme power for four years to be forgotten in three days?"

"A riot thereupon began," continued the freedman in his quick monotonous tones. "The people burned Caius Caesar's body in state in the Forum, and attacked the houses of the conspirators. Brutus and Cassius were obliged to flee from Rome."

Agrippa exclaimed with pleasure and began to ask eager questions, but Octavius lifted a finger to check him, and drawled:

"That is not all?"

"No, sir," admitted the freedman. He hesitated, then went on uncomfortably: "The will of Caius Julius Caesar adopted you as his son, sir, and made you his heir——"

"Ah!" cried Agrippa delightedly.

"—but your relatives do not wish you to accept the inheritance," concluded the freedman in a rush.

It was plain that he had been leading up to this disagreeable announcement from the first; now that he had managed to make it he looked apologetically at Octavius (who sneezed), and fiddled with his gown again, but seemed relieved. Agrippa was silent from sheer consternation; Octavius, having finished sneezing at leisure, lay quite still, looking down at his hands, his expression mild and calm. The others watched him anxiously. At length he remarked simply:

"Why?"

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"It would involve you in such trouble with Marcus Antonius," explained the freedman deprecatingly. "Since the Senate confirmed Caius Caesar's acts, he has seized all Caesar's papers, and constantly brings forth memoranda which he says Caesar intended to decree. He has seized also much money, which he says was public money temporarily under Caesar's care. It may be so—or it may be money rightfully belonging to Caesar's personal estate. If, therefore, you claim your great-uncle's inheritance you will be highly disagreeable to Marcus Antonius, as in some sense a rival."

"The Optimates will protect me against Antony," observed Octavius in his calm, empty tones.

"The Optimates!" exclaimed Agrippa, startled. "You will side with Caesar's murderers?"

"For a time," drawled Octavius. "Till I have secured the inheritance and made myself a place."

"But, Caius Octavius," expostulated the freedman. "With all respect I——"

"Please don't call me that," said Octavius pettishly. "My great-uncle has adopted me—a little late, it is true; but then the Senate has ratified all his acts. By Roman law my name is therefore now Caius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Please try to remember this."

There was a pause.

"You mean to accept the inheritance, then?" said the freedman sadly.

"How else?" drawled Octavius. "It is too great to renounce, I think." He raised his eyes, and his companions were startled by the piercing avidity of his gaze.

"There are two legions stationed here," said Agrippa eagerly. "They are devoted to Caesar—they will follow you to Italy if you ask."

The freedman gave a deep sigh at this prospect of renewed civil war. Octavius cast down his eyes again and seemed to reflect.

"No," he said at length mildly. "How should I get them across the sea? Besides, it would look so bad, so unconstitutional; it would alienate all decent citizens from my cause. My illustrious adoptive father," he went on, with a thoughtful sniff, "never troubled himself enough about appearances. Had he understood that to the ordinary man appearance is more important than reality, he would be alive to-day."

"If you will read these letters—sir," said the freedman, carefully avoiding the use of any name, as he offered them: "you will learn how strongly your relatives urge you not to accept either adoption or inheritance."

Octavius took the letters with a bland smile. The others watched him anxiously as he unrolled each in turn, read it and carefully re-rolled it.

"I shall rise from bed now," announced Octavius suddenly. "I shall leave for Italy at once—please find a ship."

"May I come with you—*Caesar*?" begged Agrippa eagerly.

"Certainly," said Octavius in a tone of condescending affability. "Meanwhile, kindly hand me my right shoe."

It was a lovely summer's day. The sun poured down dazzling rays from a cloudless sky; the sea, a bright deep blue near the shore, was streaked further out with delicious shades of azure and silver. The beautiful curving Naples coast, the sweeping slopes of Mount Vesuvius, the peaked range of mountains beyond, lay on the calm brilliant bay like shadows, dark and soft, yet clear, the colour of the bloom on a purple grape. Ahead of Cicero rose the grey-white cliffs and green slopes of the little island of Nesis, an agreeable pleasure-estate which had been given by Caesar to Servilia. The island was fringed with a gentle pearly surf, and looked welcoming and pretty; the boat moved so quietly across the calm blue water that Cicero was able to write to his beloved Atticus with his own hand; the orator

looked forward with eager pleasure to philosophic talk with the admired tyrannicide, the saviour of Rome, Brutus, who was staying with his mother. Altogether, in spite of the deplorable proceedings of Antony, who was undoubtedly arming with an eye on the supreme power, and the probable awkwardness of meeting Servilia, Cicero could not help feeling cheerful.

The oarsmen—sturdy brown fellows with earrings and very white teeth who pleased Cicero by their lively jesting—brought the skiff gently alongside the neat white quay; Cicero disembarked, and found a litter waiting to convey him up the long steep lane, which constantly turned upon itself, to the fine villa which crowned the island. Here he found himself at once in the presence of his hostess. Cicero was taken aback, but Servilia appeared so much smaller and older than he remembered her—seeming indeed a thin bowed little woman with white hair and a deeply lined face out of which gazed great sad eyes whose fire had died—that he forgot his resentment, and felt, out of his kindly heart, quite simply sorry for her. Between congratulation and condolence, Brutus and Caesar, he stammered, perplexed; Servilia however put his confusion at an end by saying quietly:

“The safety of my son is now all my care. He is in the garden,” she added at once, “expecting you eagerly, so I will not detain you longer.”

She bowed her head in farewell, and left him very quietly.

A slave came forward and led Cicero through the house to a charming terrace where, amid cactus and palms and roses and marguerites, Brutus and Porcia were sitting together on a marble bench overlooking the sun-bathed sea. Cicero had hardly time to wonder how Servilia and Porcia managed to live beneath the same roof, when Brutus sprang up to greet him, a look of keen pleasure on his sombre handsome face.

But the old orator's pleasurable anticipations of a happy day were gradually chilled. There was an air of change

about everyone which depressed his spirits. Servilia was changed; Brutus was changed; Porcia perhaps—whom he had known when she was the wife of Bibulus—had changed most of all. She seemed more slender, younger than before; and whereas Cicero had previously thought her well enough in looks, but not remarkable, now she appeared to him beautiful, elegant, even fascinating. She was dressed in some very fine thin silk—"What would Cato have said to that?" thought Cicero, shocked—of two soft shades of yellow, with a magnificent string of onyx wound about her wrist. It seemed to him that she doted immoderately on her husband; she watched him with an anguished protectiveness in her gleaming eyes, and hurried to order wine for him, or a fan, or cushions, whenever he needed them, and sometimes when he did not. A slight nervous twitch on the face of Brutus, observed Cicero shrewdly, betrayed an irritation at these excessive attentions. At dinner, when Servilia made her only reappearance, Cicero actually observed, with amazement, a sympathetic glance pass between the two women—a glance on Porcia's part of appeal, on Servilia's of comfort and understanding. A change indeed, to find sympathy between Cato's daughter and the mistress of Caesar, thought Cicero unhappily.

As the evening wore on, and the two men slowly paced the terrace together, talking of affairs of State, pausing sometimes to mark the changing colours of the mountains in the rich warm glow, the graceful antics of the fishing-boats skimming the calm sea, Cicero began to think he understood the women's sympathy, however; they were doubtless united by the deep concern they shared for Brutus. For Brutus was cold, stern, even rather harsh, to his family, his guest, and himself; it seemed too plain that he was far from happy. He and Cassius had been excused by the Senate from remaining in Rome for the rest of their year of office, and allowed to proceed at once to the provinces allotted to them for the following year by Caesar. This was to secure

their personal safety, which was by no means certain in Rome—not, at least, as long as Antony was consul. Brutus clearly hated this necessity, and yearned for Rome. He was making preparations to leave Italy for Macedonia, however, and pointed out to Cicero some fine galleys, with two banks of oars, lying in Naples harbour, which he had collected for the purpose.

Cicero took this opportunity of hinting the true purpose of his visit. The increasing dominance of Antony being quite intolerable to him, he wished to be allowed to journey to Macedonia in the company of Brutus.

“ But it is your duty to return to Rome, Marcus Tullius ! ” exclaimed Brutus sternly. “ You must return to Rome, and strengthen the Republic by every means in your power. Do not allow the sacrifices already made,” he added, turning away and speaking in a low and bitter tone, “ to be wasted.”

“ If only you had invited *me* to your banquet on the Ides of March,” countered Cicero crossly, “ we should not be troubled by that gladiator of an Antony now.”

“ If you had murdered Antony, others would have taken his place,” said Brutus mournfully. “ Each man has his heir.”

Cicero sighed, and his genial face fell into peevish wrinkles. He longed for Rome, but feared Antony greatly, and although he admitted enthusiastically the honour which the slaying of a tyrant had conferred on Brutus, he yet found it rather uncomfortable to be snubbed by a man so much younger than himself.

This experience befell him repeatedly that evening. Brutus turned his head away, and declined to utter congratulations, when Cicero mentioned his recent divorce of Terentia and re-marriage with a young ward. “ *He* divorced,” thought the old orator pettishly, but somehow did not venture to remind Brutus of that fact. He therefore turned the talk back to events in Rome. But it appeared that

Brutus was deeply hurt by several instances of the tyrannicides' unpopularity in the City—amongst others, the election of his half-sister's husband, that ardent Caesarian Lepidus, to be Pontifex Maximus in Caesar's place, and the handbill prepared in Brutus' absence announcing his games, which spoke of the month of their occurrence by the Caesarian name of July instead of the Republican name of Quinctilis. Cicero therefore tried to turn his mind from the City by speaking of Octavius. But this was even less successful.

"He is staying in the villa next to mine," gossiped the orator. "A most worthy young man! Devoted to me! Of the highest principles! He likes to be called Caesar, but of course I did not gratify him."

"Why not?" said Brutus coldly. "Since you have ratified his great-uncle's public acts, why not his will? Since you allow a dead man's memoranda to bind you in State affairs, surely Octavius has a legal right to Caesar's name."

"I own I should be glad to gratify Octavius if you think it right," said Cicero, veering to suit his company.

"I did not say I thought it right," said Brutus sharply. "Octavius has a legal right to his great-uncle's private patrimony, but no more."

"The Senate means to support Octavius in the matter of the inheritance, against Antony, I believe, nay, I am sure," said Cicero eagerly.

"Why against Antony?" said Brutus with a chilling anger. "Why not treat both as private citizens, and give them justice? Why not let the matter go to the courts? Why treat it as an affair of politics?"

"But Octavius will be useful to the Republic as a check to Antony," murmured the disconcerted Cicero—really it was difficult to know what to say to please; Brutus was becoming as awkward as Cato. "It is necessary at least to keep them hostile and apart—Octavius is a useful pretext against Antony."

Brutus sighed impatiently and dropped the subject; when next he spoke, it was to compliment his guest on some of his recent writings.

By this time the sun was sinking; the trees above Naples turned very dark, the villas very white; the sky became turquoise, and a thin white mist rose over the sea. Cicero made formal farewells and took his leave. A little perplexed by the position taken up by Brutus, he nevertheless felt stimulated by his contact with his lofty integrity, and he was pleased to find that the younger man meant to escort him down the hill to the little quay. He protested more and more warmly against this honour at every turn of the steep road, popping his head out of his litter with childlike eagerness, his beaming eyes all the time revealing his real pleasure, in a manner very endearing; so that at last a smile crossed even Brutus' melancholy face—the slaves were tittering long before—and he bade the orator farewell with much affection, and urged him to visit him again very shortly, before his departure for Rome.

"For I beg you most respectfully and urgently to return to Rome and do what you can for the Republic, Marcus Tullius," he said earnestly, carefully handing Cicero down into the skiff.

"I will ! I will !" cried Cicero, as the boatmen, grinning cheerfully, turned the boat and began to pull on their oars. "You can rely on me to keep you-know-who in check !"

He continued to shout, and wave his arms importantly, till the boat passed out of earshot, and the words *Octavius*, *check*, and *Antony* flew thick and fast across the sea.

Brutus returned on foot to the terrace above, and stood there, leaning against a column, with folded arms, brooding, while the sea deepened to violet and the mountains slowly veiled themselves in rich blue shade and withdrew. Then there came the rustle of silk on marble, and Porcia approached through the dusk, softly calling his name.

"I am here," said Brutus with reluctance.

Porcia came and stood beside him, clasping her hands about his arm. Brutus did not speak, or turn to her.

"Why are you so sad, Marcus?" said Porcia tenderly at length. "You have done a great deed, and liberated the Republic from a tyrant. What cause is there then to be always sad?"

"Cause enough," replied Brutus, sombre.

"Need you leave Italy so soon? Why do you not stay here quietly with me?" urged Porcia, looking up with yearning into his averted face.

"I must go soon," replied Brutus drearily.

Porcia, with a murmur of despair, pressed her face against his shoulder, and drooped against him.

For a long time they stood thus, Brutus aloof, reluctant, Porcia very intent and still. The sea, the mountains, the little sails, gradually disappeared, and nothing was left but one bright star in the dark; in the hush of night the surf on the rocks below came to their ears with mournful insistence.

"Dead men do not die," muttered Brutus in a brooding tone.

"Marcus!" breathed Porcia with a shudder of superstition. "May the gods avert the omen!"

Her husband did not hear her. "If only the Republic will not make itself two tyrants instead of one!" he fretted. "Dead men do not die . . ."

FREEDOM, FAREWELL!

THE PLEAS OF BRUTUS that he should return to Rome were exactly what Cicero wished to hear; to be told his presence was necessary to the safety of the Republic was highly agreeable to the old orator, who still looked back wistfully to the great days of his consulship. When Antony summoned the Senate for the first day of September, Cicero therefore decided to attend, and returned to Rome for the purpose. But on his arrival he learned that the business of the day was the decree of some further extraordinary honours to the dead Caesar, and actually to order supplications to him as a divinity. A temple was indeed to be erected to him, and dedicated to the Divine Julius and his Fortune.

“The divine Julius!” exclaimed Cicero, opening his large childlike eyes wide in horror. “A baldhead among the gods! What impiety!”

This remark, being repeated with gusto all over Rome, reached the ears of Antony, who therefore had strong reason to suspect that Cicero’s excuse of fatigue for his absence on the day of the decree was false, as indeed it was. Furious, Antony spoke angrily against Cicero, threatening him with all kinds of punishments for non-attendance.

On the following day, Cicero therefore went to the Senate, and when asked his opinion on some of the business before the house, took the opportunity to defend himself. He began his speech mildly, with an account of his motives for leaving Rome and for returning, and actually praised Antony for his judicious behaviour at the time of Caesar’s death. In

truth he was nervous, not only with his customary nervousness when beginning an oration, but also because it was months since he had spoken in public, and he felt unsure of himself and his powers. But as he proceeded, and the Senate listened attentively, he gathered courage. It was so delightful to be speaking again ! To see that look of rapt attention, to watch men's faces change at his words ! O, it was glorious !

"As for this shocking act, this inexplicable impiety of joining a dead man with a religious observance," cried Cicero in his beautiful sonorous tones : " I pray only that the immortal gods may pardon it, and not impute it as a crime to Rome."

A thrill ran through the Senate, and thence through Cicero's heart. Now he held them in the hollow of his hand, to wake or soothe, to melt or fire, at his will ! He forgot everything but his grievance and his eloquence ; bright burning sentences accusing Antony flowed like lava from his lips ; he laughed at Antony, and the Senate could not but laugh ; he raged at him, and the Senate could not but rage. The oration had a magnificent success. At its close Cicero felt himself back in his old place of influence and power. His large eyes beamed, his thinning blood ran fast again ; he was happy, eager, busy, Cicero the father of his country once more !

The infuriated Antony had an answering oration composed for him, learned it word for word and practised it for fourteen days before venturing to deliver it in the Senate. Cicero, naturally following the lines of his previous success, in reply composed a speech so bitter, so vehement, that it could not safely be delivered ; it was copied out, however, and passed about the City, sent to Brutus and Cassius, who had now left Italy to take up their provinces, read all over the Roman world.

And for the next six months Cicero continued to pour out these impassioned denunciations vigorously and joyously,

and in order further to vex Antony, sustained the pretensions of Octavius in every possible way. Antony changed the allotment of the provinces in favour of his own partisans, and took up arms ostensibly to enforce the change ; Octavius, who as Caesar's adopted son had influence with Caesar's dreaded veterans, was encouraged by the Senate, under Cicero's influence, to arm and oppose him. Antony at this point complained with justice that two Caesarian armies were fighting each other like gladiators, with Cicero for a trainer ; at this Cicero chuckled with glêe, attacked Antony more and more fiercely, fawned upon Octavius more and more tenderly. He saw himself as the arbiter of the fortunes of the Republic, holding the scale between these two legatees of Caesar—when Octavius rose, Antony necessarily sank, he thought ; presently Antony would fall altogether to the ground, then the scale holding Octavius would fly up and dislodge him too. Meanwhile, Cicero held the balance, Cicero the orator, the father of the State ! Delightful ! Brutus from abroad wrote in alarm to him repeatedly, reproving his slavish treatment of Octavius, begging for caution. " If you will only see the depth of my alarm in regard to him ! " besought Brutus. But Cicero pursued his own policy of playing off one enemy of the Republic against another cheerfully—infuriating Antony and behaving as gently to Octavius, as he said, as an ear-lap—sure that it was the right one. Lepidus, the Pontifex Maximus, suddenly went over to Antony with a few legions ; it was awkward, but Cicero felt no real alarm, for Antony had Octavius against him—and when Antony was finished, the Republic would finish Octavius. The young Caesar, as Cicero neatly put it, was in every way to be complimented, honoured, and sent aloft.

This ambiguous remark was repeated to Octavius, who observed in his suave flat tones that he did not mean to soar in any sense except the honourable one. A calculating look appeared on his face as he spoke, and presently he

smiled thoughtfully; he had now received everything he needed—rank, money, legions—from the Senate, and could afford to discard it and proceed to his real designs.

The raft, poled by an old ferryman, moved slowly across the dull sluggish waters towards the island. It was November, and a chilly mist hung over this river of Northern Italy. Octavius, who viewed rivers, rafts and mists with an equally intense dislike, shivered and pulled his toga more closely about him. He quite agreed, however, that an island in the middle of a river, where armies were necessarily out of call on the banks, was the only safe place for a meeting between Antony, himself and Lepidus; he certainly would not trust himself in Antony's camp till they had agreed on terms, and did not blame Antony for feeling the same about his own. Lepidus was really negligible, but useful as representing religion, and to make a third in the alliance; Octavius had not forgotten that Pompey and the divine Julius did not quarrel until after Crassus was dead. Attended only by his secretary, therefore, Octavius was making this disagreeable journey on this chilly day, to arrange for the conduct of the Roman government by these three men.

Antony and Lepidus had already reached the island, and stood on the soaking grass before the tent watching his approach; they evidently did not wish to do him either the honour of advancing to meet him, or the affront of receiving him as a mere guest in the tent. Octavius avoided this little difficulty by affecting not to see them at all; he minced up the roughly trodden path with his eyes down and a pre-occupied expression. The tent was warmed, he was pleased to observe, by a charcoal brazier; a marble pavement had been laid, and draped chairs set about a table with writing materials. He observed that Antony and Lepidus both wore military dress, and for a moment regretted his own toga; but he was not fond of military garb, which exposed the

thinness of his shanks deplorably, and to wear a different dress from theirs after all distinguished him—he contrived skilfully to seat himself between them, as though presiding. Lepidus began a formal greeting, but Antony cut him short.

“We needn’t waste time with formalities,” he said in a loud tone of disgust. “We’ve wasted too much already, fighting each other like two gladiators with Cicero as a trainer.” He was proud of this comparison, which he repeated on every possible occasion, and went on now in a better humour: “Our interests are the same.”

“Just so—we wish to avenge my father’s murder,” drawled Octavius.

Antony, who hated to think of this thin pale lad with his silly weak voice as Caesar’s son, and was maddened by the suggestion that anyone had been nearer to Caesar than he, scowled and made no reply, and Octavius took the opportunity to slip in what was for him the essential point in the negotiation:

“Our position can be confirmed later by law—a good title would be: triumvirs for counselling the Republic.”

Antony stared at him. He was not much given to abstract considerations, but he did spare a moment now to wondering how this insignificant lad had managed to worm himself into a position on a level with Marcus Antonius, consul, master of the horse to Caesar. He knew the answer, however; it was simply Cicero. Antony made a convulsive movement of his hands, then, since facts were facts and the power of Octavius could not be denied, controlled himself and said thickly:

“The title doesn’t matter a snap of the fingers to me. What matters is the steps we take to secure ourselves and avenge Caesar.”

Octavius, with a slight sigh of relief for Antony’s admission of his equal right in the triumvirate, said briskly:

“There will be a proscription, I suppose.”

"Yes, by Hercules !" shouted Antony. "A proscription and a long one !"

Octavius gazed at him distastefully. His new ally's physical appearance—the enormous muscles of his heavy shoulders, his brown hairy arms with the barbaric gold bracelets, his thickly curling hair, fiery eyes and bronzed face—were as repulsive to him as Antony's thirst for blood.

"The murderers will head the list, of course," he said in the sweetly righteous tone he always used when speaking of the tyrannicides.

"Brutus and Cassius first," agreed Lepidus, making a note of the names on his tablets.

"You can put them down, yes," said Antony impatiently. "But we shall have to *fight* them, in their provinces. The proscription is for enemies in Rome."

"Have you any one especially in mind ?" drawled Octavius, watching him from beneath half-closed lids.

"Yes ! Cicero !" thundered Antony.

Lepidus wrote down *M. T. Cicero*, murmuring: "His son too, I suppose ?"

But a slight frown appeared on Octavius' girlish brow.

"It will look bad," he demurred. "It will look very bad. And what harm has Cicero done us, after all ?"

"A very popular figure," agreed Lepidus, erasing the entry with the flat end of his stilus, "and harmless."

"Harmless !" shouted Antony, his face purpling. "Harmless !" He struck the table with his fist so that his bracelets jingled and the pens danced. "If the proscription lacks Cicero, your triumvirate lacks me !" he bellowed.

Octavius sighed. "Very well," he agreed mildly, sniffing. "Cicero."

Cicero lay on a bed in his villa near Formiae, face downward, his head covered. When the first list of those proscribed by the triumvirate reached Rome, and he discovered

his own name amongst the three hundred, he fled to the coast and took ship, meaning to leave Italy. But it was winter, the sea was rough and he was old, he could not bear the thought of exile, could not believe that Octavius would so betray him; he landed again in the south and journeyed ten or twelve miles back towards Rome. But all he met expressed such horror at seeing him, such alarm that he was still in Italy, within Antony's reach, that he took fright again, turned aside to this villa on the coast, and commanded his slaves again to find him a ship. Hardly had his steward left him on this errand, however, than he was called back, and returned to find Cicero sitting up on the bed, shouting wildly.

"No, no !" cried the old orator, his eyes dilated. "I will not leave Italy. I will return to Rome. Octavius will not dare to hurt me—the young Caesar, I mean; I have always called him Caesar. I am the father of my country. My consulship was the most glorious in the history of Rome. I saved the Republic !"

His slaves exchanged sad glances; alas, the Republic to-day was very far from being saved. Cicero, staring from one to another eagerly, read their thoughts. His face quivered; tears filled his old eyes and began to course slowly down his wrinkled cheeks.

"I will go and kill myself on Caesar's hearth," he murmured pitifully, "and so bring a curse on him. Get my litter, you." Since no one stirred, he screamed out angrily: "My litter ! Quick ! Quick ! I go to Rome !"

"It will be wiser not, sir," hesitated a slave.

Cicero, restored for the moment to his senses, groaned and threw himself back on his pillows. The slaves stood there wretchedly, watching him, not knowing what to do for the best.

"Leave me," murmured Cicero at length. "I must think—I must consider."

The slaves withdrew in some relief, but stood about his

door whispering, their hearts full of pity for their master. The villa was unprovisioned, since Cicero's arrival had been unexpected, and they had sent a young slave out for food and wine. The lad now came rushing back in a panic; panting and fearful, he gasped out that there were soldiers on the road above.

"What!" exclaimed the steward, horrorstruck.

"There's a centurion and fifty soldiers, and another officer of higher rank," panted the boy. "I think he's a tribune. They're asking for the villa of Cicero—they're coming this way."

There was a stir of alarm and horror among the slaves.

"We can't let him stay here," said the steward impatiently. "Whatever he says, we must get him to the sea. Bring in his litter." He threw open the doors of Cicero's room and marched in firmly. "Here is your litter, sir," he announced in a loud clear tone, as if to a child or a fool: "We are taking you to the shore."

Cicero gazed up at him piteously. "I don't want to go," he said in a sad confused mumble. "I don't know where to go. I must think—I must consider."

"You can do that in the litter, sir," urged the steward, listening in a sweat of fear for the sound of soldiers marching. "When you are on the ship, you can decide then whether to seek Marcus Brutus in Macedonia, or return to Rome."

"True, true," murmured Cicero, nodding his massive old head. "I can decide on board."

The steward suddenly thought he heard a trumpet. "Quick, quick, sir!" he cried in a panic. He seized Cicero under the arms and raised him; another slave took his feet, between them they bundled the protesting old man into the litter, and soon hurried it out of the house and down one of the shady lanes sloping to the sea.

It was close upon sunset; the line of mountains curving round the bay to the north-west was very clear and dark

against the golden sky ; in the paler east a soft pink cloud hung motionless. Everything was still, cool, calm ; not a breath of wind stirred the gnarled branches. It seemed impossible that such a peaceful evening could be desecrated by violence ; the steward and the slaves, Cicero himself, began to recover from their first panic, and when at a turn in the lane they caught a glimpse of the smooth unruffled evening sea, they quite took heart and allowed themselves to feel less anxious. Just at this moment, however, a noise arose behind them ; the sound of blows on wood, shouts, commands.

" They are at the villa ! " whispered the steward, his large face ashen. " Hurry ! "

The litter-bearers, gasping and sweating with fear and haste, quickened their step. But it was useless ; after a silence, running footsteps and shouts suddenly sounded to their right.

" Turn aside here ! " whispered the steward frantically.

The bearers swung off into the olive grove ; the litter jarred from side to side as they hurried down the rough path. But this too was useless ; in a moment they heard steps ahead of them, and even glimpsed the red and bronze of soldiers, through the trees.

" Turn this way ! " whispered the steward, almost weeping.

" No ! " cried Cicero suddenly. He drew aside the litter curtains, and commanded, in a tone trembling but determined : " Set me down here. Flight is useless. I cannot escape."

The bearers, perplexed, halted, and at the same moment the soldiers caught sight of them. With savage cries of joy they rushed upon the litter ; the bearers, seeing resistance to be useless, set it down and stood back. Cicero leaned out, and called for the tribune. From the exigencies of his flight he was unshaven, and his hair and clothes were tumbled and soiled ; nevertheless his face, worn by his troubles, had

an air of dignity as, fumbling for his chin with his left hand in the familiar gesture he had used a thousand times in the Senate, he said in a tired sad tone:

"Come! Finish it quickly."

The tribune made a sign. Cicero's slaves gasped and covered their faces as the centurion drew his sword and with two strong blows struck off their master's head.

He then proceeded to sever the orator's hands.

"What are you doing?" cried the steward, weeping. "Do not insult him—he was noble and learned, and a lover of Rome."

"Antony's orders," explained the centurion calmly. "The hands that wrote Cicero's speeches, and the tongue that delivered them. That's so, isn't it, sir?" he added, turning to the tribune.

"That is so—you have done your duty," agreed the tribune, looking a little pale.

"What in the name of Mars is Brutus about?" thought Cassius irritably, screwing up his eyes and gazing across the plain near Philippi, trying to make out what was happening on the right wing.

Cassius was in a bad humour altogether this morning, and had snapped his officers' ears off when giving out his orders, so that they still felt sore and snubbed. The truth was, Cassius did not like Brutus being in command of the right wing. The right wing was always the post of honour in battle, and Cassius had far more experience of fighting than his brother-in-law. But the military council last night had voted the place to Brutus, and Cassius, scowling and biting his nails, was uncomfortably conscious that Antony was commanding the enemy's right, Octavius the enemy's left, so that if Brutus had the right wing he would face only Octavius, but if he had the left, would be fighting Antony. The thought of Brutus fighting Antony made Cassius feel

quite sick. But then, so did the thought of appearing subordinate to Brutus—the difficulty was to know which suggestion of the two nauseated him the more. Scowling even more ferociously, Cassius the soldier decided that Antony simply must have the more experienced soldier against him; he snapped out therefore that he agreed—Brutus should lead the right. The officers and men, who were fond of Brutus—as if that had anything to do with fighting, reflected Cassius angrily—were delighted; Brutus himself was surprised but pleased. He came to his friend after the council to thank him for the trust he had placed in him.

“You shall not find me lacking in ardour,” he said gravely.

“I don’t suppose I shall,” said the irritated Cassius. “But this is a battle, you know—not a skirmish like those you’ve won before in Macedonia.”

The dark eyes of Brutus flashed a little at this, but he said merely: “Have you any special instructions to add to the orders of the day?”

“No,” snapped Cassius. “Don’t start too soon, that’s all—or too late. Don’t let them stop to plunder the camp. And take care of yourself, Marcus,” he added crossly.

Brutus gave him a smile of affection.

“We may win, and all the rest of our time live a happy life together,” went on Cassius gruffly. “But if you are dead, life will hold little for me, however great the victory. Will you remember that in your ardour?”

Brutus laid a hand on his shoulder and pressed it, then went out without reply.

That, however, had happened last night; now it was morning and battle, and Cassius was in a very bad temper indeed. Brutus’ men seemed to be rushing forward in a wavering line, before his own had started; their flank was quite exposed and the front rank out of sight.

“If Antony catches them like that!” groaned Cassius. “Jupiter!”

He could not decide whether to advance himself as arranged, or to deploy more to the right to help Brutus; presently his soldier's training triumphed and he kept to the prearranged plan. He gave the signal, the trumpets sounded, and his own men began a steady advance. Cassius, riding forward, screwed up his eyes again and tried to make out what was happening on the right wing. "Really they appear to be advancing straight into the enemy's camp," thought Cassius dubiously. "But Brutus can't have secured a success like that, so soon."

At this moment, while he was still gazing across the plain in the other direction, a sudden frightful tumult arose on his left, and a whole squadron of the enemy's horse, led by Antony himself, swept down on his flank in a swift and terrible transverse charge.

Brutus had, in fact, secured a considerable success. The legions opposite were not expecting him so early, they were not indeed expecting him at all; in their experience Antony always began the battle, and Antony had given no signal yet. Octavius, who was suffering from a cold and had been advised by his physician that he was not fit to fight that day, at the first onset of the legions of Brutus was warned by an omen (so he said) to leave his tent; he promptly obeyed the omen and withdrew. The Caesarian left wing, therefore, lacking a general and taken by surprise, retired in fairly good order but rapidly, and formed up in the rear to await Antony's instructions. "We win, we win!" thought Brutus joyously, galloping forward and waving his sword; somehow he had never imagined a Republican victory, and the thought of what it would mean exalted him to the skies—his cheek was flushed, his eye sparkling, his voice rang out full and free. The Republic restored! Porcia! Rome free and noble, as in days of old!

"Forward, forward!" shouted Brutus. "Don't stop for booty; forward!"

He galloped on, but found that very few were now

following him; his men were all scattered amongst the tents, busy with gold plate. He rushed back and shouted at them with all the fury at his command; but this was not very alarming to his men, for they knew his gentle and kindly disposition, and did not believe a word would come true of the punishments with which he threatened them. Brutus harangued them till his throat cracked and the sweat ran down his face, but they did not move, and he saw it was useless to try for a further advance.

"Well, Cassius will undertake the pursuit," he consoled himself; for if he had succeeded so far, Cassius, being so much the better soldier, must of course have succeeded further. He looked over towards the left, hopefully.

To his alarm, the tent of Cassius, which had stood on high ground, was no longer to be seen there. Antony in fact had completely driven in the left wing; enraged by the success of Brutus' attack, which had taken him unawares, Antony led his charge with so much fury that Cassius, himself surprised in his preoccupation with Brutus, was quite unable to persuade his men to stand it; they fled, and Antony's cavalry flew over the camp. "Defeat! Defeat!" thought Cassius, grinding his teeth with rage as he galloped—for if he had been so badly handled, doubtless Brutus had suffered even worse. He reached a small rise, drew rein, and rallied his men; knowing his austere and imperious temper they did their best to form up promptly, for they dreaded his outbursts of rage almost more than the swords of the enemy. Antony was now prudently withdrawing to help his other wing.

"Go see what Brutus is doing," Cassius commanded an officer angrily. "Be quick now! Tell him to get all his men that are left, back to this line here, and re-form."

The man galloped off. At the foot of the hill he was met by a party of Brutus' officers, sent to report their victory to Cassius by their successful general. Proud of themselves, they shouted and waved their swords in cheerful greeting; the

better to hear their news, the officer of Cassius dismounted. Cassius, watching him through eyes blurred by the Parthian sun, by the anguish of defeat, by the conviction of his own superiority as a soldier to Brutus, thought that the group of officers belonged to the enemy—for, after all, they were all Romans, they all wore the same dress and arms.

"Everything is lost," decided Cassius in a fury. He seized the freedman who attended to his armour by the shoulder, and thrust his own dagger into the frightened man's hand.

"But what—sir—why?" stammered the fellow.

"Kill me, you fool!" shouted Cassius irritably. "Make haste! Do you suppose I want to be taken alive by Antony? Hold it firm!"

The terrified freedman held up the dagger as bidden, but could not bring himself to wield it; the point wavered as uncertainly as his frightened eyes. Cassius with an angry oath seized his wrist and steadied it; then flung himself furiously on the blade. It was the same dagger, he remembered as the point pierced the flesh, with which he had stabbed Caesar.

The wind blew cold on the sweating horses as they toiled up the rocky pass, their hoofs ringing on the stones, their tired heads sawing. The night sky, though clear, was starless, but a diffused gleam on the horizon foretold the coming of the moon. It was twenty days after the first battle of Philippi, which, in spite of the death of Cassius, had been indecisive; a second battle had that day been fought by Brutus and lost.

"Cassius is happy to be beyond all care," was the sombre thought of Brutus, as his horse stumbled patiently up the uneven path. "At least he died a free man among free men. As for me, whither does all this lead me; whither?"

He was guiltily conscious that he had allowed himself to be urged into the second battle against his will, by his men. There had been soreness between his own legions and those of Cassius, angry recriminations having passed on the subject

of the first battle, so badly lost, so nearly won; and soon the men began to collect in groups and murmur that Brutus fought always either too soon or too late. His officers had not suppressed the grumbling; and Brutus had allowed the taunt to overbear his better judgment, and agreed to fight. The onslaught was superb and terrible, the men being determined to prove to their general that they were right; but it was useless, the battle was hopelessly, fatally, lost.

"I carry on war like Pompey," Brutus told himself bitterly: "commanded rather than commanding. And with the same success." He brooded a moment and added: "And not only in war is it so with me."

The fleeing cavalry topped the long steep pass at last, and came to a more level stretch of the rough road along the side of the mountain. The horses, snorting with satisfaction, quickened their pace. But they had been in battle since the afternoon, in flight since sunset, and soon they dropped to a walk again, in which the constant jingle of harness betrayed their stumbling fatigue. A small upland valley, grassy, with a clear swift stream, opened out to the right.

"This will do," growled the centurion, who saw it first.

Without waiting for an order from their commander the leading squadron turned off into it at once and dismounted.

"This is not far enough—we must press on if we are to reach our former camp by dawn," cried Brutus, galloping up from the centre of the column.

The men looked at each other with a sullen air, and made no move to re-mount.

"Why do we want to reach our old camp?" snarled one at last.

"It's our only hope of further resistance!" exclaimed Brutus impatiently.

But this brought a tumult about his ears.

"Resistance! Who wants any more resistance? We're sick and tired of fighting—you look after yourself and we'll look after ourselves! All we want is good terms of surrender—

this is our last chance of life and we mean to take it ! ” the men shouted derisively.

Brutus sat his horse for a moment in silence, looking down at them. His officers, who were well aware that they had encouraged the men to force him into battle, and had moreover a strong personal attachment to Brutus, were ashamed and tried not to catch his eye, but did not offer any opposing suggestions.

“ We are fighting for freedom—for the Republic,” urged Brutus at length with emphasis.

“ We’ve tempted fortune too often for the Republic,” grumbled a trooper.

“ What’s freedom to us ? We want peace ! ” cried another.

“ Aye, that’s right ! ” shouted the rest.

“ They’re tired of fighting,” offered the centurion, and it was clear that he was tired of it himself.

Brutus gave them another long look. They shuffled uneasily and looked away, but remained obstinately silent. There was no fight left in them, and it was useless to pretend otherwise. Brutus sighed and gave in.

“ We will camp here to-night,” he announced coldly: “ and discuss our further plans in the morning.”

The look of relief and gratitude on their faces sickened him. He turned his horse impatiently aside and rode up towards the head of the valley. The rest of the column, which had paused in the pass without to await their general’s orders, now poured into the valley thankfully. Beaten and again beaten, they had no spirit left to lighten their immense fatigue; they kept awake barely long enough to water their horses at the stream and tie them, then flung themselves down in such sheltered corners as they could find, rolled themselves in their cloaks and fell asleep.

Brutus from sheer exhaustion did the same; but after the first hour of deep unconsciousness his misery pricked him out of rest; he started awake, and found himself, not in his father’s house in Rome as he had been dreaming, but here

on a rocky mountain in Macedonia, beneath the cold bright moon, in the hour of final defeat. The battle was lost, and the Republic was lost, and freedom was lost; Antony and Octavius had won, and the Republic was no more. They will quarrel presently, thought Brutus; but what of that? Octavius is sure to win; he is cold and sly, calculating and careful, while Antony is hot and frantic and blundering, like a boar. It is a true proverb: *The boar is often held by a small dog*; so it will be with Antony. Octavius will win, and will wield all his great-uncle's supreme power, smoothly and urbanely, using small matters to entrap men in great; snuffing and mild, he will take men's liberties without their knowing it, expertly, like a light-fingered thief. But I shall not be there to see it, decided Brutus strongly. Since such is the temper of these soldiers here, the last army of the Republic, I am no longer useful to my country. Since Rome means to bid farewell to freedom, I will bid farewell to life.

He flung aside his covering and stood up, then looked about him consideringly. The moon showed clearly the humped backs and sprawled limbs of the exhausted men, and Brutus earnestly desired for them that they should sleep the night out without disturbance, after the anguish, the humiliation, of the day. He picked up his sword-belt from the folds of his cloak where it had lain beside him and slung it over his shoulder, then, stepping carefully, made his way out of the sleeping group, and began to climb the hill. He climbed slowly, for he was worn out by sorrow, flight, and fighting, and had a couple of recent wounds unhealed; but at length he reached the summit, and exclaimed in surprise at the vast view of mountain and plain which lay stretched before him, black and silver beneath the brilliant moon. In this cold light the hills seemed devoid of grass or foliage, all that was visible was their naked form. The wind moaned round the rocks, died away to an utter stillness, rose again to its quiet cold moan. Far away, at the distant turn of the

plain, a smudge of deeper black revealed the united armies of Octavius and Antony. They seemed so very far away that for a moment the hope of life and victory sprang hot in Brutus' breast; surely he and this cavalry here could escape them ! But escape whither, and for what ? No, repeated Brutus, remembering the weary sullen looks of the war-worn men, since Rome bids farewell to freedom, I will bid farewell to life.

But let me at least know what I am dying for, and why, reflected Brutus ; let me at least in the hour of death understand my life. He sought a tall rock which sprang up boldly, turning its silvered face to the plain, and leaned against it with his arms crossed, gazing out over the moonlit world, which looked like a dead world, the ashes of itself, as Octavius' Rome would be the ashes of the dead Republic. How has Rome come to this, he asked ; before I die let me find the answer. How have we let freedom slip ?

Some might answer, he reflected, with the names of Pompey, Crassus, Cato, Cicero, Caesar, and then my own name, and those of Cassius, Antony and Octavius ; yes, we might answer with a list of famous Romans. But a particular instance is never the final answer to any question—so at least the wise Greeks say.

I will answer myself, then, reflected Brutus, by accusing the arrogance and stupidity of the patricians, the selfishness of the wealthy, the timidity, confusion and delay of the moderate well-meaning men, the greed and fickleness and stupidity of the people. Add to these the immoderate rewards offered to political ambition by our view of government as a means to riches ; and there is a soil fit to breed ambition, conspiracy, bribery and violence enough to corrupt all Rome. The defects of our military arrangements, our system of justice, our rule in the provinces, are not the cause but the result of these our weaknesses. Yes, that is true, decided Brutus, testing his conclusions. The arrogance of the Senate, keeping the great magistracies for patrician families, obstinate

against reform. The stupid awkwardness of the honest Cato, repelling men from the proper course by his own stiff dogmatism. The selfish avarice of Crassus. The muddled well-meaning of Pompey. The uncertain timid leadership of Cicero, bold only when he thought it safe, which was always just too late, or when excited by his own phrases. My own inert submission to circumstances, alternating with ill-considered bursts of rashness. The readiness to be bribed, whether by money, corn, or games, of the general body of Roman citizens, led by such tribunes as the abominable Milo ; their too great susceptibility to mere words.

Perhaps too, thought Brutus, hesitating, we depend too much on our slaves to make life pleasant for us ; perhaps no man can be truly free who is surrounded by slaves.

And what of Caesar ? There is a tragedy, I think, reflected Brutus, in the lives of men who revolt against the misuse of power, fight it, conquer it, take power to themselves and so misuse it. But if power does not tempt revolt by misuse, such men are loyal citizens. When the State is strong, great men add to its lustre ; when the State is weak, they contemptuously throw it aside. The Republic was too small for Caesar ; in trying to make it great he broke it. So we were fools to hope to end despotism by murder ; we forgot that a man always leaves inheritors, who share what he leaves between them. A dictator leaves supreme power behind as his patrimony, and Antony and Octavius will share Caesar's power till men are tired of fighting, and submit gladly to the one who brings them peace. Yes, it was wrong to let Caesar become a despot, and wrong to murder ; we should have defended ourselves strongly from the first, within the Republic's law. Law brings forth law, but the sword only the sword. Once override the law, and the law is robbed of its force, its power of protection.

Perhaps therefore this act of mine now is also a weakness and a betrayal, thought Brutus, drawing his sword ; but I cannot do otherwise. There is nothing I can do now, alive ;

dead, I may make a fable, may remind Rome that one of her citizens preferred to bid life, rather than freedom, farewell.

Antony, to whom the defeated legions surrendered a few hours later, was surprised to find himself feeling actually sorry as he gazed on the calm still face of Brutus, noble in death; it reminded him somehow of Caesar—the Caesar he had loved, who had loved Brutus—and of the good old days before the civil war. Well ! Life was different now. He commanded the body to be burned ceremonially in a purple robe, and sent the ashes to Servilia. Porcia, when she heard of her husband's death, snatched some burning charcoal from the brazier; holding it close against her mouth she stifled herself with the fumes, and so died.

EPILOGUE

PEACE WITH DISHONOUR

“THE DIVINE EMPEROR CAESAR AUGUSTUS, son of the divine Julius,” intoned the crier pompously: “is now approaching the Senate.”

The Senate rose and remained standing.

After a few moments Octavius—he had been offered the attribute of August as a title by the Senate shortly after the battle in which Agrippa finished off Antony for him, and had graciously condescended to accept—came in composedly.

“All good fortune attend thee, Caesar Augustus,” recited the Senate in a decorous tone.

Augustus gave them all his sweet suave smile, and arranged his small body in his special chair.

The Senate thereupon re-seated themselves very quietly—the divine Augustus disliking noise—and waited for him to speak, hushed and motionless.

A quaestor who had followed in the Emperor’s train carrying a large scroll respectfully handed him the manuscript. Augustus, looking round again with a smile which revealed his small scaly teeth, began, without rising, to read.

“Whereas it has been reported,” he recited in a thin hoarse tone.

A decree, thought the senators; and listened attentively.

But the divine Augustus had a cold and found his throat painful; after a few sentences he therefore handed the scroll back to the quaestor, who read out loudly:

“Whereas it has been reported that the business of the Senate is often delayed by reason of the scanty attendance, not enough numbers being present to conduct affairs in accordance with the law, and whereas it is reported that

there are persons of the necessary property qualification who will not become senators, swearing even when their names are entered on the list that they are ineligible . . .”

The members of the Senate sat very still, keeping their eyes down so as to avoid any glances, hoping their faces did not look as long as they felt. It was common knowledge that no one was any longer to be found nowadays who would of his own choice become a senator, the duty being so tiresome and tedious and the taxing of the senatorial rank so high; Augustus had already increased the fines exacted for non-attendance, once; they hoped earnestly that he was not about to do it again. It proved even worse than they feared, however.

“The Senate therefore decrees,” intoned the quaestor, “that all persons of the requisite property shall become senators, unless disqualified by proved physical disablement. All of suitable birth below the age of thirty-five shall at once submit themselves to an examination of their person and their property for this cause, and the divine Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Julius, will graciously conduct the examination.”

He concluded, and with a deep bow to Augustus rolled up the scroll.

It was customary nowadays to signify the passing of the decrees of the divine Augustus by applause. The Senators therefore now, aghast at the difficulties in which their sons, cousins and nephews were about to find themselves as a consequence of this decree, rose at once and clapped their palms together respectfully.

Augustus with a farewell smile gathered his toga about him—many people did not trouble to wear the toga nowadays, but the divine Augustus encouraged the old custom both by example and edict—and withdrew.

The Senate dispersed; the business of the day was over.

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